

The Muslim Sunrise

Summer 2014
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"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

Revelation

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The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 195 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah).

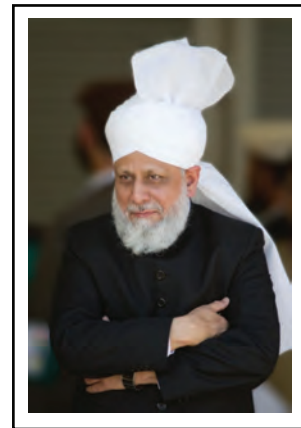
The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity.

Hadrat Ahmad(as) proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching:

“There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257).

It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason. After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifat-ul-Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah.

www.alislam.org



Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifat-ul-Masih V

The Muslim Sunrise

www.muslimsunrise.com

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allahu anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.





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Muslim Sunrise Vol. XVI, First Quarter 1944



FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ
وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۚ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ
وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا ۚ
وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۚ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ
مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا ۚ

رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِّئَلَّا
يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ۚ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ۚ

لَكِنِ اللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ
بِعِلْمِهِ ۚ وَالْمَلَكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ ۚ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ
شَهِيدًا ۚ

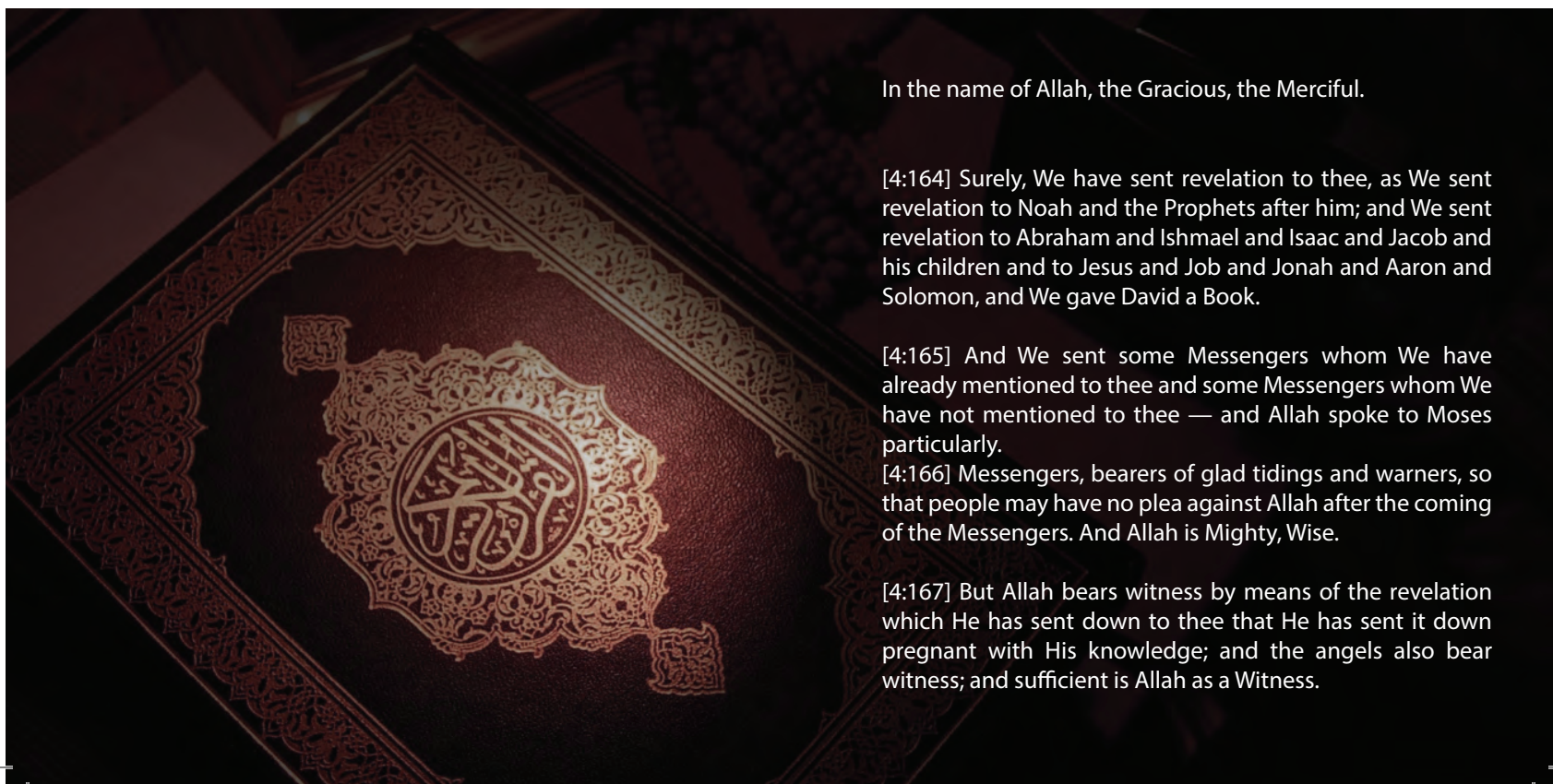
In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

[4:164] Surely, We have sent revelation to thee, as We sent revelation to Noah and the Prophets after him; and We sent revelation to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and his children and to Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave David a Book.

[4:165] And We sent some Messengers whom We have already mentioned to thee and some Messengers whom We have not mentioned to thee — and Allah spoke to Moses particularly.

[4:166] Messengers, bearers of glad tidings and warners, so that people may have no plea against Allah after the coming of the Messengers. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.

[4:167] But Allah bears witness by means of the revelation which He has sent down to thee that He has sent it down pregnant with His knowledge; and the angels also bear witness; and sufficient is Allah as a Witness.



IN THE WORDS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^(as)

(Islami Usul ki Philosophy),
Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 10, pp. 437-441]

By revelation is not meant something that arises in the mind as a result of thinking and reflection, like that which a poet experiences in writing his verses. He writes a verse and reflects about the next one and it suddenly arises in his mind. This is not revelation; it is a consequence of thought and reflection, which flows from the law of nature. Anyone who thinks about good things or evil things finds that something arises in his mind in consonance with his thinking and his search. For instance, a good and righteous person writes some verses in support of truth and another one, who is wicked, supports falsehood in his verses and abuses the righteous. Each of them will produce some verses and it should be no matter for surprise that the enemy of the righteous who writes in support of falsehood may, on account of greater practice, write better verses than the other one. Thus, if anything arising in the mind were to be called revelation, a wicked poet, who is the enemy of truth and of the righteous and always abuses the truth and indulges in imposture, would be deemed the recipient of Divine revelation. Works of fiction contain many affecting passages and the minds of authors are able to produce a series of writings on purely fictitious subjects, but they cannot be called revelation. If revelation were the name of any idea arising in the mind, a thief could be called a recipient of revelation for he can think of clever ways of robbery and ingenious plans of housebreaking and manslaughter cross his mind. We cannot call all this revelation. This is the thinking of people who have no clear notion of the True God, Who comforts the hearts with His converse and bestows the understanding of spiritual knowledge on those who are not familiar with it.

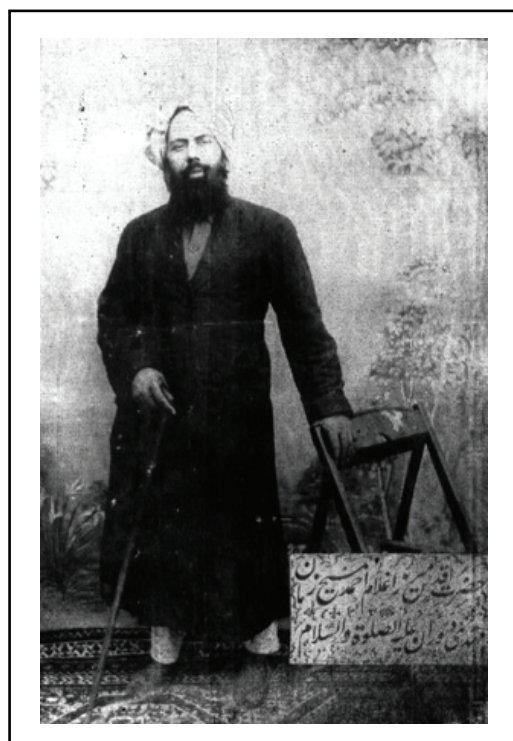
What is revelation? It is God's converse in living and powerful words with a chosen servant or with one whom He desires to choose. When this converse starts in an abundant and satisfactory manner and is free from the darkness of false thinking and is not confined to a few scattered and incomplete phrases, and is delicious and is full of wisdom and majesty, it is the Word of God by which He desires to comfort His servant and through which He manifests Himself to him. Sometimes a communication is made only for the purpose of a trial and is not accompanied by all the characteristic blessings of revelation. A servant of God Almighty is thereby tried whether by tasting a little of revelation he adjusts his circumstances to those of true recipients of revelation or fails to do so.

Then if he does not adopt true righteousness, he is deprived of the perfection of this bounty and is left with only vain boasting.

Millions of good people receive revelation but they all do not have the same rank in the estimation of Allah. Even the Prophets who are the recipients of clear revelation are not all equal in rank, as God Almighty has said:

[2:254] These Messengers have We exalted, some of them above others: among them there are those to whom Allah spoke; and some of them He exalted by degrees of rank.

This means that some Messengers are superior to others. It shows that revelation is pure grace and is not the insignia of rank. Rank depends upon the degree of sincerity and fidelity, which is known only to God. Revelation when accompanied by its blessed conditions is also a fruit of sincerity and fidelity. There is no doubt that if revelation takes the form of question and answer in a proper sequence and is characterized by Divine majesty and light and comprises hidden matters or true understanding, then it is Divine revelation.

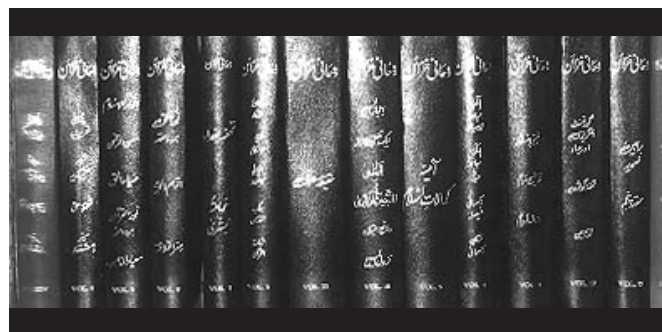


**For Divine revelation,
it is necessary that there should
be converse between
the servant and his Lord**

as there is converse between friends when they meet. When the servant asks a question and in reply hears a delicious and eloquent speech from God Almighty, in which there is nothing of his own thinking and reflection and such converse becomes a bounty, then it is Divine speech and such a servant is dear to God. But this degree of revelation, which is a bounty, and is living, pure, clear, and unsullied, is bestowed only upon those who march forward in their faith, sincerity, righteous action, and also in what is simply ineffable. True and holy revelation demonstrates great wonders of the Divine.

**On many occasions,
a brilliant light appears
and along with it
a majestic and shining
revelation is conveyed.**

What could be greater than a recipient of revelation conversing with the Being Who is the Creator of heaven and earth? The beholding of God in this world is to converse with God. By this, we do not mean that condition in which some odd word, phrase or verse might flow from the tongue of a person without being accompanied by a direct address. A person who has such an experience is being tried. He casts about like a blind one and does not know the source of the communication whether it is from God or from Satan. Such a one should have recourse to Istighfar. But if a good and righteous person begins to receive, Divine communication without obstruction, a bright, delicious communication which is full of wisdom, in majestic terms and in complete wakefulness, and there has passed between him and God Almighty a series of at least ten questions and answers in



the course of which God accepted his prayers a number of times and conveyed to him fine understandings and informed him of coming events, then such a person should be most grateful to God and should be wholly devoted to Him, inasmuch as God has of His pure grace chosen him out of all His servants and has made him heir to the righteous ones who have passed on before him. Such a bounty occurs rarely and is a matter of good fortune. Everything beside it is of no value.

Islam has always produced people of this rank and station. It is Islam alone in which God comes close to a servant and talks to him. He speaks inside him and makes his heart His throne and draws him towards heaven and bestows upon him all the bounties that have been bestowed upon those who have gone before. It is a pity that the blind world does not appreciate how near a person can approach to God. They do not step forward themselves and when someone steps forward he is either dubbed a Kafir or is deified and is put in the place of God.



EDITORIAL

SUMMER 2014

Throughout human history, God has shown true dreams, sent revelations and provided new knowledge to people of all nations. Just because God reveals some words to a human being, it does not make him superior to others. God has honored common people with revelation and without regard to ethnicity, race, color, creed or gender. The Holy Qur'an even mentions about His revelation to the honey bee.

The Holy Qur'an has specific references to revelations given to prophets of various races and nationalities. It also has given the examples of revelation to women such as the mother of Moses(as) and the mother of Jesus(as). Sending revelation is one way of Him giving humans proof of His existence.

In some cases, God talks to someone and revelation becomes a steady course and is not an occasional occurrence. The constant converse of God can include prophecies of future events, commandments and spiritual messages. In Islamic terminology, anyone receiving such revelation in abundance is called a prophet.

It is in this context that the Holy Qur'an has testified about the prophets of Israel such as Moses(as), Jacob(as), Joseph(as), Jonah(as), Jesus(as) etc. The ultimate recipient of such revelation was our Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa) whose every action, every word and every moment of life was in accordance with revelation from God.

In the 20th century, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) of Qadian, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, claimed to be the Messiah and Mahdi as a result of receiving an abundance of revelations. He described that although God still speaks and sends revelation to people of all nations, it is not possible to achieve the status of a prophet without following the teachings and example of Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa). It is his own example that was a proof that he achieved this status in the Eyes of God only and only through his love, affection and through his complete obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa).

Looking at the religious history of Jews and Christians, no true prophet has appeared among them since Jesus(as) son of Mary. This is a tremendous proof of what the Promised Messiah(as) has stated.

The Holy Qur'an and the Bible agree on the point that a false prophet is killed, meaning dies an unnatural death. There are examples of such people who claimed to be prophets outside the course of following the Holy prophet Muhammad(sa) and who were killed. There are other examples but to name a couple, Joseph Smith of Latter Day Saints and the Baab of the Bahai faith can suffice.

Revelation continues and the latest example of someone reaching the status of a prophet is the Promised Messiah, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) who claimed to be a prophet and lived a life of success and whose community thrives throughout the world today. He not only was the recipient of divine revelation continuously but he even produced followers on whom the Holy Spirit descended and who became the recipient of Divine revelation as well.

We invite everyone to join the community and follow the path of Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa) by which one can earn the status of receiving revelation from God.





Jumu'ah Sermon Synopsis

Delivered by Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad
on MAY 23, 2014

Hadrat Khalifat-ul-Masih recited the following Quranic verses at the start of his Friday sermon:

'And no soul can die except by Allah's leave — a decree with a fixed term. And whoever desires the reward of the present world, We will give him thereof; and whoever desires the reward of the life to come, We will give him thereof; and We will surely reward the grateful.

And many a Prophet there has been beside whom fought a large number of godly people. They slackened not for aught that befell them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they humiliate themselves before the enemy. And Allah loves the steadfast.

And they uttered not a word except that they said: 'Our Lord, forgive us our errors and our excesses in our conduct, and make firm our steps and help us against the disbelieving people.'

So Allah gave them the reward of this world, as also an excellent reward of the next; and Allah loves those who do good (Surah Ale Imran, verses 146 – 149).

'Think not of those, who have been slain in the cause of Allah, as dead. Nay, they are living, in the presence of their Lord, being well provided, Jubilant because of that which Allah has given them of His bounty; and rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from behind them, because on them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve.

They rejoice at the favor of Allah and His bounty, and at the fact that Allah suffers not the reward of the believers to be lost (Surah Ale Imran, verses 170-172).

It is great grace and favor of God on the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) that He has given it people who understand the spirit of their pledges and understand the spirit of sacrifice and not only do they understand the spirit of sacrifice but they also set models of it of which many examples can be found in this age. If it is a matter of financial sacrifice, it is the Ahmadis who demonstrate it, if sacrifice of time is demanded, the Ahmadiyya Jama'at present excellent models of it. Examples of sacrifice of honor can be seen among Ahmadis, they dedicate their lives to spread the message of Islam and if a true model of sacrifice of life is to be seen, the history of Ahmadiyya Jama'at has set its seal on it. In short, any sacrifice which is in accordance with the commandment of God and is for God, is given by Ahmadiyya Jama'at.

Today God has bestowed a community to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) a large majority of which understands the spirit of sacrifice of property, life, time and honor and is also ready to give sacrifice. However, sometimes, due to lack of knowledge or owing to humanness, some will say something which is against the dignity of a true believer and can adversely affect those who have not had the requisite moral training. Some people even write to Huzoor that the period of trials is getting too long. If the period of trials is long, may God soon provide ease, communities of Prophets and true believers believe in the provisions provided through God's help.

However, it is against the dignity of a believer to express reliance on worldly ways and means for support.

For example someone wrote to Huzoor that the persecution of the Jama'at in Pakistan should be broadcast through a large portion of MTA schedule and other means should also be utilized for raising the voice against persecution in the world. The letter gave the impression that perhaps we should also adopt ways of creating noise in a worldly way and make protestations to make the governments who are against us take note and pay attention towards human rights and this period of trials be over. He also wrote that his Shia friend has told him that if what is happening to Ahmadis was happening to Shias, they would take out rallies and demonstrations and raise a clamor of protestations in the world at every minor persecution. He said that Ahmadis do not protest properly and this is why their period of trial is so long.

The first thing to remember here is that when we claim to be a divine community we should be mindful that such communities do not believe in relying on worldly governments and protestations. There is no hand of any worldly help in the progress of divine communities. Moreover, worldly help is never unconditional, it is never offered without any clause to capitulate before whoever is offering help and true believers cannot abide by this. They seek help from God and turn to Him alone. When we seek God's help in times of trials, He opens further avenues of progress and advancement for us. Today, Ahmadis spread all over the world, in 204 countries, are witness to the fact that our trials are opening up new avenues of success for the Jama'at and we are traversing greater heights. We should not be perturbed that our period of trial in one country is long. What should be borne in mind is how far-reaching are the blessings of God for the Jama'at. As far as utilizing worldly means to help our cause, indeed, this should be done and with the grace of God, we utilize such means within limits. We make the world aware of the persecution and tell them that if they do not join in putting an end to the persecution, it will simply spread. Yet, we neither rely on any government nor on any human rights organization, but only on God. This is the subject which Huzoor had expounded in his few previous Friday sermons that believers should always look only to God for all their outcomes.

Ways adopted by worldly people are violent rallies and protestations and riots, they respond to persecution with oppression because they have not been given divine promises that the ultimate triumph will be theirs.

Whereas we have been promised that in spite of state-sponsored persecution God has decreed that we will be given those blessings which are bestowed upon true believers through God's special grace.

We have been promised that the sacrifices given will never go to waste and the ultimate triumph will be ours. The greatest formula for this triumph is of course prayer. The more we will turn to prayers and the more we will devote ourselves to our Lord, the sooner He will show extraordinary signs in our favor. Indeed, our thinking is very different to the thinking of worldly people. We have taken the Bai'at of that Imam of the age to whom God promised triumphs, which we are witnessing. As far as the Shia community or others are concerned, Huzoor said he cannot see they are getting their rights by adopting worldly means of protestations, all that is happening is that persecution is being responded with oppression, which we will never do.

By way of example of the stance of worldly people Huzoor said a newspaper here published an article saying that Muslims are not loyal to this country and they should be expelled/deported. Our press section responded to this and told them that this was incorrect and Islam teaches being loyal to the law of the land and to love one's country. They said in response that this was not how other Muslims behaved and asked us to write something advisory to them. We agreed to write something if they were prepared to print it and sent them a statement written in line with their requirements. The editor or the board declined to publish it on the pretext that they had received some other material that had to be printed although the real reason was that they did not have the courage to publish it. They did not want to displease other Muslim sects who are against Ahmadis as they fear them because of the harsh stance of some Muslims.

Huzoor said that he often tells their leaders and the press that in order to establish peace justice has to be maintained and double standards dropped. Some of them admit that although they will not publicly say so but they have vested interests in the agendas that they pursue. How can we rely on those who are duplicitous! The newspaper was not prepared to publish something expressing love of one's country. Those who suggest to us that we should seek help from worldly ways and means should ponder how could we look to these people and seek their support. If every Ahmadi understands the reality of reliance and trust in God and begins to put it in practice, the persecution against Ahmadis, wherever in the world it may be, will be blown away by prayers alone. However, the

condition is that prayers are made with the requisites of prayers! Indeed, in Pakistan and some other countries Ahmadis are treated very badly, in places it is done under the guise of law. However, this did not start a few decades ago. In fact this persecution has been going on since the time the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) made his claim and established the Jama'at. There was a time when it was felt that he may have to migrate from his ancestral village of Qadian which had been owned by his family for ages.

When we look further back in history we find that the entire life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was a period of enmity shown by his opponents. What sort of life did his beloved wife; who was a very wealthy business woman and one of the richest people of Makkah, spend after becoming a Muslim! She was made homeless in her old age and spent a long time in a valley in exile where there was lack of food and basic provisions and the time spent there caused her eventual passing away. This is what she endured for Islam in the hope that the sacrifices carried divine promises. The Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be on him) also endured severe harassment and persecution. The thirteen years of his Makkan life were spent in constant discrimination which he faced with great courage and valor. When he was asked to pray against someone he would pray for their guidance and when he was pelted with stones and ended up soaked in blood due to injuries on a day he called the worst day of his life, God asked if his enemies should be destroyed, he asked for them to be spared just in case in future people are born among them who accept Islam. After migration to Medina, wars started which entail a long tale of attacks and patience and steadfastness. Apart from the excellent models of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) his companions also showed amazing fortitude because they had set their sights on divine promises.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) was to come as a zil (a shadow), a reflection of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) which he did, therefore he told his followers that he and his community was to face persecution. He did not say that his way was a bed of roses but said that it was a very hard and difficult way.

Hadrat Khalifat-ul-Masih said he also says to new Ahmadis that life in Ahmadiyyat is not a bed of roses. Huzoor said recently he had a session with new Ahmadis where he put this question to a new Ahmadi who hails from Pakistan. He replied that he had taken Bai'at after giving it due consideration and was ready to endure every hardship. Women have left families but have not abandoned faith. This is because they have had the insight into giving precedence to faith over worldly matters.

They realize that life and death is in God's Hands and fortunate are those who show steadfastness and are the recipients of God's blessings in this world and the Hereafter. These are not mere words; history of the Jama'at is filled with such stories of sacrifice some of which are amazing. This is because the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) had said at the very beginning that this is how things will be and had also said do not let your faith be compromised in the least after witnessing and enduring such situations and remember that God rewards steadfastness in this world and in the Hereafter.

The verses recited at the beginning of the sermon are also on this subject. Everyone faces life and death. It is expounded that life and death is with God's decree and death in the name of God carries glad-tiding of great reward. When Khalid bin Waleed, a great warrior of early Islam was on his death bed a friend went to see him. Khalid bin Waleed started weeping intensely. The visitor thought this was due to fear of death, so he said, Khalid, you fought the enemy with such courage why do you weep now out of fear of death? He asked the person to uncover his upper body. The visiting friend saw every inch of his upper body was covered in wound marks. He then asked the friend to uncover his legs and the friend saw every inch of his legs covered in wound marks. Khalid bin Waleed told his friend that he did not cry out of fear of death but because he always wished for martyrdom and the wound marks were a testimony to his wish. But, he knew he was dying on bed and wondered if it was due to his sins that he did not attain martyrdom. Such was the high level of those who truly understood the spirit of sacrifice. Indeed, God also gives the glad tidings of Paradise to a brave warrior like Khalid bin Waleed.

Another example of a person who understood the spirit of sacrifice was demonstrated by Sahibzada Abdul Latif Shaheed. The king repeatedly asked him to reject and deny the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and incited him with freedom in return. Every single time Sahibzada Sahib's reply would be that if God was granting him a death that makes one a recipient of blessings, why would he turn away from it. He said it was a strange ignorant deal to ask for! Indeed, this is the dignity of a true believer, as God has stated: 'They slackened not for aught that befell them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they humiliate themselves before the enemy. And Allah loves the steadfast.'

Today our opponents are similarly frustrated as to why we do not flinch and bow down to them. They do not realize that an Ahmadi always seeks the pleasure of God. And God has taught a prayer for staying firm on one's faith no matter how much the enemy tries to weaken our faith: 'Our Lord, forgive us our errors and our excesses in our conduct, and make firm our steps and help us against the disbelieving people.'

While God has told us to turn to Him in everything He has also told us that success comes from Him and for this we are told to turn to Him and seek from Him to become recipients of rewards in this world as well as the Hereafter.

In the latter verses of Surah Ale Imran, as explained before, words of assurance are given to further strengthen faith. It is stated that those who give their lives in the way of God are not dead. The connotation of 'as dead' apart from the obvious is also something which is not avenged, or behind whom no one is left to fulfill his objective or one who is sad and in despair. However, those who are slain in the way of God are not 'as dead' but are in the category of the living. God will avenge their blood and secondly their martyrdom will not weaken those left behind, in fact there will always be a group exuding the spirit of martyrdom and thirdly these martyrs will be granted a station and provision by God which will delight them and their death is not a sad death but is a death which creates means of happiness. The martyrs will be informed in the Hereafter that not only their sacrifice has increased those who wish to offer sacrifice but is also going to be a source of the ultimate triumph over the enemy. These sacrifices, these trials and temporary tribulations do not halter our progress and do not push us in despair. God states in the Qur'an: 'As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, saying: 'Fear ye not, nor grieve; and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. (41:31)

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) explained: 'That is, upon those who affirm: God is our Lord, and turn away from false gods and are steadfast, that is to say, remain firm under trials and calamities, descend angels, reassuring them: Fear not nor grieve, and be filled with happiness; and rejoice that you have inherited the joy that you had been promised. We are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter.

These verses indicate that steadfastness wins the pleasure of God Almighty. It is true, as has been said, that steadfastness is more than a miracle. The perfection of steadfastness is that when one is encircled by calamities and life and honor and good name are all in peril in the cause of Allah, and no means of comfort are available, so much so, that even visions and dreams and revelation are suspended by God as a trial, and one is left helpless among terrible dangers, at such a time one should not lose heart nor retreat like a coward nor let one's faithfulness be put in doubt in the least. One should not let one's sincerity and perseverance be weakened, one should be pleased with one's disgrace; one should be reconciled to death; one should not wait for a friend to lend one his support in order to keep one firm;' (The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam' pp. 171-172)

Each one of us should try and aspire to become as the Promised Messiah explains and this is not possible without the grace of God. If a person makes effort and becomes like this, then God comes forward and holds such a person and this is when God gives glad-tidings of Paradise and for this He has taught us prayer for steadfastness, prayer for gaining triumph over the enemy. It signifies that by accepting the prayer God will open the doors of triumph in such a way that the enemy will have nowhere to escape. Inshallah the ultimate triumph will be ours as promised to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace).



WHAT'S REVELATION?

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as)
The Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi

REVELATION, INSPIRATION, VISION AND DREAM

I tell you truly that every door can be closed, but the door of the descent of the Holy Spirit is never closed. Open the doors of your hearts so that it might enter into them.

There is no safeguarding law through following which we can secure ourselves absolutely against mistakes. That is the reason why the philosophers, who framed the rules of logic and invented the methods of discussion and built the arguments of philosophy, fell continuously into error.

They left as the legacy of their ignorance hundreds of false notions and mistaken philosophies and vain discourses. This shows that it is impossible to arrive at the truth of every matter and to determine the correct doctrines as the result of one's own research without making a mistake. We have never known any individual, nor heard of one or read of one in any book of history, who was free from error in the whole field of his vision and reflection. It follows, therefore, that it is basically impossible to find people who, through the study of the laws of nature and squaring their conscience with the circumstances of the world, carried their research to the highest level of truth, without any possibility of mistake.... Obviously, if man cannot escape error through his own knowledge and if God (Who is Gracious and Merciful, and is free from every mistake and knows the truth of every matter) does not help His servants through His true revelation, how could we humble creatures emerge out of the darkneses of ignorance and error, and how could we be delivered from the calamities of doubt and suspicion? I, therefore, affirm with full conviction that the wisdom and mercy and sustaining love of God Almighty demand that from time to time, when He deems it right, He should create men who should be recipients of revelation for the purpose of ascertaining true doctrines and establishing correct morals, and who should have bestowed upon them the capacity of impressing their teachings upon others so that mankind, who have been created for true guidance, should not be deprived of their needed good fortune.

(*Purani Tehzirain, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 2, pp. 20-21*)



The Necessity of Revelation

Arguments are of two types, inductive and deductive. An inductive argument enables us to recognize that which is indicated. For instance when we observe smoke we conclude that there is a fire. In the case of deduction, one moves from the conclusion to the cause. For instance, we find a person suffering from high fever and we believe that there is a cause for it. We proceed to set forth first the inductive reason for the need of revelation. There is no doubt that the physical and spiritual systems of man are governed by the same law of nature. We observe in the physical system that whatever needs the Gracious God has planted in the human body, He has also provided the means of their satisfaction. A human body feels hunger and needs food, so God has provided various types of food for the human body. In the same way, man needed water to slake his thirst and God Almighty has provided wells and springs and streams for that purpose. Man needed the light of the sun or light from some other source to be able to see with his eyes and God Almighty has provided light from heaven in the shape of the sun and has provided light from other sources on earth. Man needed air for breathing and hearing the voices of others, and God provided air. In the same way, man needed a consort for the propagation of the species; so God created woman as man's consort and man as woman's consort. In short, whatever desires God has planted in the human body, He has also provided means for their satisfaction. Now it is worth considering that when provision has been made for the fulfilment of the physical needs of the mortal body, how much more must have been provided for the fulfilment of the pure desires of the soul which has been created for the eternal love and recognition and worship of God. That provision is Divine revelation and Divine signs, which carry a person of defective knowledge to complete certainty.

Spiritual Vs Physical needs

Inductive and Deductive Arguments

As God bestowed upon the body provision for the satisfaction of its needs, in the same way, He bestowed upon the soul provision for the satisfaction of its needs so that the physical and the spiritual systems should be in accord.... This inductive reasoning can be completed only through deductive reasoning, that is to say, by a sample of revelation itself. To feel the need for something is one matter and to find its fulfilment is quite another.... You can see that both food and water are available for your body, not that they were present in some earlier age but not any more. But when mention is made of revelation you refer to a past age upon which centuries upon centuries have lapsed and you are not able to refer to anything in the present. Then how is there an accord between the physical and spiritual laws of nature? Stop and reflect. You cannot deny that the provision for your physical needs is available to you all the time, but you have nothing with you in the way of provision for your spiritual needs except stories of the past. You know that the physical springs from which you take the water to slake your thirst are still running; nor have your fields become barren and unproductive, the produce of which satisfies your hunger twice a day. But where are the spiritual springs, which used to slake your spiritual thirst by giving you the fresh water of Divine revelation? Nor have you available the spiritual food by eating which you could keep your soul alive. Thus you are in a desert where there is neither food nor water.

(Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 23, pp. 63-66)

Characteristics Of True Revelation

1. It is received at a time when the heart of the recipient, being melted through its ache for truth, flows towards God Almighty like clear water. This is indicated in the Hadith that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in sorrow and should be studied with a sorrowful heart.
2. True revelation is accompanied by delight and conveys certainty in an unknown manner and penetrates into the heart like an iron nail. Its words are eloquent and free from error.
3. True revelation possesses a certain majesty and strikes the heart with power and descends upon it with force and an awesome voice. False revelation is conveyed in a low voice like the voice of thieves and eunuchs and women inasmuch as Satan is a thief and a eunuch and a woman.
4. True revelation is charged with the power of God Almighty and contains prophecies which are fulfilled.
5. True revelation fosters the recipient's goodness and purifies him of inner impurities and improves his moral condition.
6. True revelation is borne witness to by all the inner powers of the recipient and it sheds a new and pure light on all his faculties and he perceives a change in himself. His previous life comes to an end and a new life begins for him and he becomes a source of sympathy for mankind.
7. True revelation does not finish with only one phrase for God's voice has a continuation. He is very Gentle and He talks to him towards whom He is inclined and answers his questions. A recipient of true revelation can receive a response to his supplications at one place and time; though sometimes an interval occurs between two series of revelations.
8. The recipient of true revelation is never a coward and is not afraid to stand up to false claimants of revelation. He knows that God is with him and would humiliate a false claimant.
9. True revelation is the means of acquiring knowledge and understanding for God does not desire to leave its recipient ignorant and without knowledge.
10. True revelation is accompanied by many other blessings. A recipient of true revelation is bestowed honor from the unseen and is given prestige. (Darurat-ul-Imam, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 13, pp. 483-490)



I was young and now I am old, but from the beginning I have been a witness of the fact that God Who has ever been hidden manifests Himself through Islam. If a person truly follows the Holy Qur'an and occupies himself with self-improvement according to its teaching, and lives not like the worldly but like a servant of the faith, and devotes himself to the cause of God and loves His Prophet Muhammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and is free from self-exhibition and arrogance and pride and seeks not his own glory but the glory and greatness of God, and humbles himself to the dust in His cause, the result is that Divine converse starts with him in eloquent Arabic. Divine words are sweet and majestic. They are not the product of one's own mind; such a product is delivered in a low voice like that of a eunuch or a sick person. But God's word is full of majesty and is mostly in Arabic and very often in the form of verses of the Qur'an. My experience is that first it strikes the heart forcefully and an echo is thereby produced which then blossoms like a flower, and therefrom issues a holy and enchanting series of phrases comprising hidden matters and possessing a majesty and a power and effectiveness whereby it penetrates into the heart like an iron nail and is fragrant with the perfume of God. These characteristics are attached to it because some ill-natured persons also receive satanic revelation or are deceived by the product of their own minds. God Almighty causes shining light to accompany His word so as to distinguish it from other types.

(Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 23, pp. 314-315)

True Unity of God Cannot be Realized Without Divine Revelation

Why the pure Unity of God cannot be learnt without Divine revelation, and why one who denies revelation is not cleansed of paganism?

This matter becomes apparent when one reflects upon the reality of Divine Unity. Unity means that one should believe that the Being and attributes of God are free of any association and that we should believe that the tasks which can be accomplished by God's Power cannot be accomplished by the power of anyone else.

It is because of letting go of this Unity that fire-worshippers, sun-worshippers and idol-worshippers, etc., are called pagans inasmuch as they supplicate their idols and divinities concerning matters the bestowal of which is in the Hands of God alone. It is obvious that those who deny revelation also believe, like the idol worshippers, that creatures are invested with the attributes of the Divine. They believe that the powers of the All-Powerful are possessed by human beings. They imagine that they discovered God through their reason and that in the beginning it was human beings who thought of appointing a God and that it was by their efforts that God emerged from the state of being unknown and was recognized and was worshipped; that He was unknown before and no one was aware of His existence and it was through wise people that He came to be known. Is this anything different from the belief of the idol worshippers? Indeed not. The only difference is that the idol worshippers appoint other things as their benefactors and these people consider their smoky reason as their guide and benefactor. In one way, these latter go beyond the idol worshippers. Though the idol worshippers believe that God has bestowed great powers on their deities and that on accepting a variety of offerings they bestow upon their worshippers that which they ask for, yet they have never alleged that God was discovered by these deities and that the existence of God was known only through them. It was left to those who deny revelation to claim God as one of their inventions and to announce that God has never affirmed: I am present; and that it was their great achievement that, without being told and informed, they found Him on their own.



He was silent like one asleep or dead and they discovered His track by the exercise of their own reflection. Thus in effect they repudiate any obligation to God, but in a way put Him under an obligation to themselves, in that, without having been informed that God exists and without full certainty that disobedience of Him would subject them to such and such torment and obedience to Him would attract such and such bounty, they have submitted to this fictitious god. According to them God was so weak and infirm that He could not announce His Own existence and could not furnish any reassurance concerning His promises. He was hidden and these people disclosed Him; He was unknown and they made Him known; He was silent and they worked on His behalf. His Godhead has become known only since a short time and that also through their efforts. Every wise person would appreciate that such an affirmation goes beyond that which the idol worshippers allege. The idol worshippers believe in their deities as their benefactors, but those who deny revelation allege that reason, which is their deity, is the benefactor not only of people but also of God inasmuch as God became known only through the exercise of reason. It is thus clear that by denying revelation they not only believe in God in a doubtful way and are involved in diverse errors, but they are also deprived of belief in the perfect Unity of God and are stained with paganism. What is the association of partners with God? Only to attribute to others the favours and bounties bestowed by God.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 1, pp. 165-167 Footnote 11)

Poetry Corner

I Will Choose My Faith

Ismail Ahmad

In the light of day, or in the dark of night,
In the time of power, courage, or in fright,
I try to keep my mind focused on the One.
The One that has no partner, parent, and/or son,
I Pray that every day it leads to something great.

But all is not as easy,
And all is not as clear.
Not all paths are straight,
And some lead out of here.

A tree that wants to grow,
It must stretch towards the Sun,
It must spread its branches out,
Not all of life is fun.

Early in the morning,
My friend asks me to play.
But I must turn him down,
I tell him, not today.

Today the day is Friday,
The day / set aside,
To go over to the mosque
And pray from deep inside.

My friend he understands,
In fact he seems impressed.
But since the day is Friday,
It may be how I dressed.

A bird that wants to fly,
It must step outside the nest.
It must start to flap its wings,
It must give the world its best.

When I go to school,
I can't blend within the crowd,
I must stand out of the masses,
Without noise or being loud.

When I hear of language,
Of which I don't approve,
I must forget of friends.
Either them, or I, will move.

When I hear of conversation,
And don't want to be a part,
I will leave without a trace,
For my own, clean, heart.

For a tree to grow,
Or for a bird to fly,
First it must make decisions,
Without worry, asking why?

A tree must choose the sun,
And a bird must choose to fly,
And I must choose my faith,
Without worry, asking why?

I must choose my faith,
With no care of recreation.
And I must choose my faith,
With no care of reputation.

I will choose my faith
Despite the tough decisions,
And I will choose my faith,
With accurate, precisions...

So every second of that day,
And every moment of that night,
I will choose my faith,
For I know that it is right.

CONCEPT OF REVELATION IN MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

By Mubasher Ahmad, M.A., LL.B.

Concepts of revelation may vary from religion to religion, but all of them agree on its vitality in the human spiritual experience. All major world religions help their followers to get in touch with the Ultimate Truth -- the profound meaning of life. In one way or the other, 'revelation' forms an essential part of all religions. Even some ancient cults had the element of revelation in their culture, and their charismatic spiritual leaders displayed their ability to get in touch with higher spirits that revealed to them modes of performing supernatural feats. Some religions originated with revelation -- the revealed words of God; and others lead their followers to receive personal revelations. Either their holy scriptures were directly 'revealed' to prophets of God, or their holy men and sages received enlightenment that was revealed to them through meditation and disciplined life.



Hinduism is the oldest of all major religions, and its main sources are the four voluminous Vedas that are considered to be *apaurusheya*, that is, not the work of man. In other words, Hindus believe that the Vedas were not created by any human effort; they were divinely revealed to saintly persons called Rishis. The names of the four Vedas are the Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva, and these Vedas were received by four Rishis named Agni, Vayu, Adita and Agira.

All these Rishis (or sublime seers) lived in India. The earliest Vedas were composed between 1,500 B.C.E to 1,000 B.C.E. It is claimed that the Rishis received direct revelations and they verbally transmitted them among others. The Vedas were originally not written down as they were "heard" by those ancient Rishis. It was later, when Sanskrit language was developed that the Vedas became written scriptures. Another term used to describe 'revelation' in Hinduism is *Shruti*, that is, "the words and sounds heard by the sages in yogic unity with Supreme Parabrahmin" [1]. That's why the Vedas are also called *Shruti*. The Vedas contain thousands of hymns and prayers in which spiritual, philosophical and mystic imagery are expressed in beautiful poetic forms. In the monotheistic revealed scriptures, the Psalms of David (as) and Solomon (as) can be compared to the Vedic hymns in their poetic expressions.

The great teachings of the Mahatma Buddha also originated in India. There is difference of opinion whether his teachings were 'revealed' to him or were his personal insights. Most of the Buddhist scholars think that 'revelation' is not a reliable source of higher knowledge because there are contradictions between the teachings of the 'revealed' religious beliefs. The recipient of revelations might have heard the sounds or words improperly, or made a mistake in its transmission to others. Therefore, in modern day Buddhism the emphasis is on one's personal meditation and discipline. The Buddhists follow the path of salvation -- Nirvana -- as it was discovered by the Buddha. But still, the question remains: what was his experience when he meditated for a very long time under the shadow of a bodhi tree, and received 'enlightenment', and his personal thoughts started to drop away? Was the 'enlightenment' a child of his own mind, or was it 'received' as a gift from some outside source?



It is written that, when the Buddha was meditating, the evil demon called Mara did try to sidetrack him from the path of Nirvana, and he calmly reached out for help and put his right hand on the Earth, and he heard the roaring sound of the Earth that made the devil Mara crumble down! Was hearing the sound of the Earth not an experience akin to revelation? Buddhism has several branches, and Pali Buddhism is one of the most important ones. An Australian scholar of Buddhism, Dr. Peter Masefield, published his doctorate thesis (University of Lancaster) in 1986 on 'Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism.' In his thesis he argues that modern Buddhism is devoid of authenticity, and the Buddha was not an innovator of a new creed, but a reformer who wanted to regenerate Hinduism of the Brahmins of his time to its original faith as was practiced by the Rishis.

If the Buddha believed in the truthfulness of the Rishis, then he had to accept revelation as the source of their wisdom. Once a seeker of the truth attains the "right view", he can gain enlightenment in matters of days, and can get connected with the supernatural. Dr. Peter Masefield concludes that the present day institutionalized Buddhism is not in its original form, having degenerated exactly as the Hindu religion of Buddha's time had been corrupted by the Brahmins of the time. Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (Allah's mercy be on him) in his famous book "Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth" argues that the Buddha believed in the Supreme God and was in touch with Him, and received his enlightenment through revelations. The allegation against him that he did not believe in God is incorrect. "When the Buddha waged a war against the prevalent idolatry to which the Brahmins of the time were entirely dedicated, he was accused of denying the existence of God. This propaganda, carried out by a powerful class of Brahmins, was so loudly proclaimed that the voice of the Buddha was drowned in their tumultuous antagonism... Thus Gotma Buddha's denial of the gods of the Brahmins was over generalized and led many to maintain that he did not believe in God" [2].



Judaism is founded on the commandments of God received by Prophet Moses (peace be on him) on Mount Sinai. Especially the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) were written by God on tablets of stone, and given to Moses (as) in an awe inspiring display of His splendor. These revealed commandments of God were elaborated further by revelations that Moses (as) received, not in written form but in spoken words of God. The first Five Books of the Torah, called the Pentateuch, are believed to be written by Moses (as) himself as he received the revelations from God. The names of these books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five books are considered to be revelations that cover all basic important subjects such as creation of the universe, journey of mankind from Paradise to a painful worldly life, moral rules of civility, laws of justice, and prophecy. These revealed books established monotheism and the covenant with God among the Israelites. Moses (as) was commissioned to be a prophet through revelation. His first encounter with God and receiving revelation was through his spiritual experience of seeing a burning and talking bush at Horeb. God revealed Himself to Moses (as) and commanded him to go back to Egypt, to liberate Israelites from the bondage of the Pharaoh and bring them to their ancient land of Canaan. Thus God revealed His desire to Moses (as) to save the Israelites and their future generations. Later, God kept on revealing Himself through all the prophets sent to the Children of Israel, and the last among them was Jesus Christ (as) who was rejected by the majority of the Jews of his time.

God revealed to Jesus (as) that he was the awaited Messiah of the Jews, and commissioned him to redeem them from the clutches of sin. The Jews of the time claimed to follow the Laws of Moses (as), but had forgotten the very spirit of love and mercy which were the basis of those revealed laws. God revealed His powers through Jesus (as), and with His command he could perform many miracles. In Christianity, 'revelation' takes a new meaning, and Jesus Christ (as) is taken as the 'Revealed Word of God' (Logos) in human form, bestowing on him the status of the incarnate savior of mankind. In the prologue of the Gospel of John, Jesus is called *Logos* in the sense that he was the transcendent, pre-existent, and incarnate Word of God. That is, he was the conceptual framework which arose in the mind of God to form the universe, the future of mankind and how to redeem it from sin. Again, in Christianity the concept of revelation takes a very special form on the basis of the last book in the New Testament, entitled the Book of Revelation or The Revelation of Jesus Christ. This book, written by the Apostle John, impresses upon the reader the idea that Jesus Christ was in full control of human historical course and its final end. This book falls under the category of apocalypse literature that reveals the future events and imminent end in forms of strange visions. These visions are revealed to the writer by some supernatural revealer. The objective of such revelation is to modify human behavior to escape the awaiting punishment at the end.

In Islam, revelation is fundamental. The first and the most important source of Islam is the Holy Qur'an which is believed to be the Word of God all in all. The entire book, each and every word in its 114 Suras (Chapters) was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) during the time span of 23 years. He was 40 years old when the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to him through the angel Gabriel, and the revelation continued until his last days. He himself could neither read nor write, therefore, he memorized the verses revealed to him, and then asked his scribes to write them down. In the Holy Qur'an, God Himself promises to preserve and protect the revealed words. Muslims believe that not a single word has been changed since the very inception of the Qur'anic revelations. The revelations vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) contain a comprehensive guidance for the believers, including the narrations of the past prophets, instructions on how to live a pious life, and prophecies about events yet to come. The Holy Qur'an sheds greater light on the process of revelation as compared to other world religions. To start with, revelations are of two kinds: legal and personal. Legal revelations form 'Shariah Law' and the Holy Qur'an is believed to be the final revelation in that sense. But then, the possibility of receiving personal, non-legislative revelation is always open as a blessing and favor of God. For example, God replies to the prayers of His servants and it can be in the form of words heard by the recipient, or spiritual visionary experience or true dreams. Throughout Islamic history, innumerable saintly persons have experienced these forms of revelations, and the process continues.



Sikhism is the youngest of all the major religions, and its sacred scripture is called Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Sikhs reverently call it their Guru or Teacher, and believe it to be Divine revelation. Sikhism started in the Punjab, India, by Baba Guru Nanak Sahib (1469-1538 AD). He was born a Hindu but was much influenced by Islam, especially its mystical branch called Sufism. He believed in equality of mankind and in Oneness of God, the invisible Creator (Rab) of all. He called Him Sat - the Truth. He claimed to have direct experience of the Truth, beloved in revelation calling it 'Bani' – the Primal Word -- 'the sound, voice or music' that generates from within when in touch with God. Guru Nanak Ji said that God Himself is the source of Bani; He manifests Himself through revelation. He observed that anyone who drinks at the fountain of Bani becomes acceptable in the Court of God [3]. Thus his religious and spiritual teachings were revealed to him by God. The fifth Guru was Arjan Dev who initiated to write down holy scripture Guru Granth Sahib in 1599 AD. A pious elder, Bhai Gurdas was assigned the task to scribe the first Guru Granth Sahib who finished his work in 5 years.

Footnotes:-

- (1) Hinduism, Scriptures and Practices by Prabha Duneja, p.1
- (2) Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth by Mirza Tahir Ahmad, p.141
- (3) Shabadanh Sri Guru Granth Sahib, M1, p. 21

DOES GOD STILL SPEAK?

By Ayesha Noor, Richmond

The concept of revelation has always intrigued the human mind. Every prophet was vehemently criticized for his spiritual experiences. Pharaoh laughed at Prophet Moses (as) for Moses's ability to speak to God. Jesus (as) was ridiculed, spat at and even hanged for being raised as a prophet of God. Prophet Muhammad's(sa) story is not any different. Ironically, today's Muslims are following the footsteps of the opponents of all previous prophets(as). For them, Prophet Muhammad's (sa) death marks the indefinite closure to the door of revelation. This concept has harmed Islam more than any external factor. Islam provides at least 5 reasons why revelation is continuous:

1. Holy Qur'an's verdict

The Holy Qur'an is explicit about the continuity of revelation. Allah has guaranteed the true followers of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet(sa) that they will be counted among His loved ones. He says:

And whoso obeys Allah and this messenger shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings - the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous. And an excellent company are they.

The above-mentioned verse undoubtedly opens the door of revelation in Islam. Imam Raghīb's interpretation of this verse is worth noting, He says:

God has divided the believers into four classes in this verse, and has appointed for them four stages, some of which are lower than the others and he has exhorted true believers not to remain behind any of these stages. ... Prophethood is of two kinds, general and special. Special prophethood viz. the law bearing prophethood is now unattainable. But the general prophethood continues to be attained.

Therefore, even if all the Muslims obey Allah and His Prophet (sa) properly, they all can achieve the status of "righteous" at the very least. Now everyone knows that being righteous is not an ordinary status. The righteous are considered friends of God. Would God not like speak to his friend?

At another place, Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah, and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, reassuring them: Fear not, nor grieve and rejoice in the glad tidings of the gardens which were promised. We are your friends in this life and the hereafter. Therein will you have all that you will ask for. (Chapter 41, Verses 31-32).

This verse is an indisputable proof of the continuation of revelation at all times. A closer study of these two verses elucidates that any believer who stays steadfast in bleakest of moments and shows perseverance in most dreary situations, is eventually given glad tidings of revelation. When loss of life, property, honor in the path of God fail to shake his faith, this is when God blesses him with the gift of revelation.

2. Nature of revelation calls for continuance

The Holy Qur'an metaphorically refers to revelation as spiritual water. It says:

By the cloud which gives rain repeatedly. And by the Earth which opens out like Herbage.

At another place the Holy Qur'an questions the believer: Hast thou not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky and the earth becomes green? Allah is indeed the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware.

These verses explicate the phenomenon of revelation in a subtle yet logical manner. They signify that rain ensures the existence of vegetation. If it ceases for a time, the water in upper layers of the earth dries up. Every year we see that the lack of rain leads to deathly droughts. Thus there exists a connection between heavenly and earthly water. Both heavenly and earthly waters are needed for the plants to grow. Just like, with the lack of heavenly water, earthly water dries up, in the same manner, reason and rationality can only do so much without the spiritual water or heavenly revelation.

Now if physical rain which is needed for physical growth never stops, isn't it irrational to end spiritual rain which is needed for spiritual growth?

3. Spiritual Advancement

It is an established belief that prophets are endowed special knowledge. Prophet Adam (as) was taught names, Prophet Lot (as) and Prophet Moses (as) were given wisdom and knowledge. Prophet Joseph (as) was given shrewd judgment and divine knowledge. Prophet Muhammad (sa) was given such knowledge that was beyond an ordinary human's capacity. In the same manner, Hadrat Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah was given divine knowledge in this day and age.

The Promised Messiah's (as) writings, sayings, his interpretation of Qur'an, his knowledge of Arabic are all living proofs of the continuation of revelation. Additionally, his "revealed sermon" that he delivered on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha in 1901 further corroborates that revelation is still existent. The "revealed sermon" is also an important example because a number of people who had gathered for Eid prayers witnessed it. Among his other literary works, his claim that Arabic is the mother of all languages is also an undeniable evidence of divine knowledge. Last but not least, the Promised Messiah's (as) unique interpretation of the Holy Qur'an is a miracle in itself.

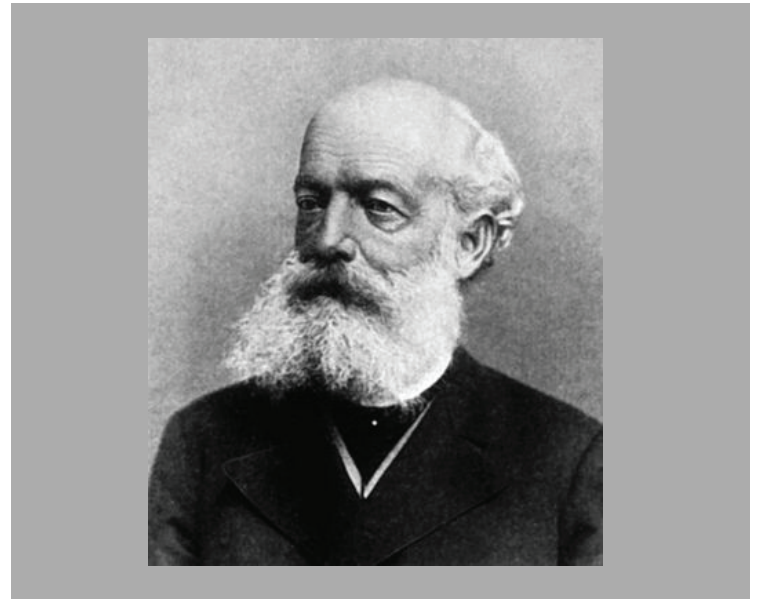
This spiritual advancement is not exclusive to the Promised Messiah (as) only. His true followers have also partaken of this spiritual water from above. His all five khulafas or successors have contributed in spiritual knowledge to a great extent. The Second Khalifah's "*Tafsir Kabir*" of the Holy Qur'an is unique in its nature. Similarly, the Fourth Khalifah's book "Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth," is a marvelous contribution on the subject at hand.

4. Secular Advancement

Once it is established that revelation is like spiritual water that pours from heaven, it becomes clear to understand that revelation is not limited to the religious people only. When it rains, it doesn't only drop on the areas, which are worthy to receive rain, it drops all over the place regardless of surface. During monsoons, sometimes rocks are covered with foliage. Similarly, during the time of a prophet, spiritual water pours in like torrential rain and even non-religious people benefit from it in their areas of specialty.

One does not have to do extensive research to notice that science and technology have exponentially advanced since the advent of the Promised Messiah (as). For instance, look at the means of transportation.

For centuries, horse back riding and camel riding were the sole means of transport. Modern rail transportation came in England in the mid-1800s, after that it took off. The year 1886 is deemed as the birth year of automobile too. Again, the automobile industry has tremendously developed since its inception. Aviation has come a long way too. The Wright brothers made their first flight in 1903. In just over a century, engineers have created planes that can fly much higher and faster than the Wright brothers ever likely imagined. Albert Einstein presented his theory of relativity in 1905. Einstein's abstract thoughts on light, space and time have led to many technological innovations, which appear to us today to be quite ordinary. Whether it is a television set, computers, cash register, digital camera, all of these new inventions are often based on his theory of relativity. The beginning of all these new advancements coincides with the advent of Promised Messiah (as).



An example of a German chemist too is worth noting in this regard. In 1865, Friedrich August Kekule, a German chemist, was struggling to solve an inexplicable problem. He was able to eventually solve it based on a dream. Famous psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, wrote his masterpiece "Interpretation of Dreams," in 1895. Not only that the time of his enlightening book coincides with the advent of the Promised Messiah (as) but also what he wrote to a friend is remarkable. He writes,

Do you suppose that some day a marble tablet will be placed on the house, inscribed with these words: 'In this house on July 24th, 1895, the secret of dreams was revealed to Dr. Sigm. Freud'?

It is, therefore, plausible that spiritual water irrigated the brains of scientists, philosophers, thinkers, psychologists, and economists in the previous century etc.

5. Khilafat -

The concept of leadership in Islam is one of the most important reasons why revelation is continuous. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty promises the institution of Khilafat to those who believe and do good deeds:

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will, surely, make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from those who were before them; and that He will, surely, establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear. (24:56)

It is clear that Allah will have a direct relationship with the khalifah whom He Himself has appointed. This does not require any further interpretation in terms of need or reason of continuity of revelation. Either we will have to accept that the Muslim world has always been void of such people who believe and do good deeds, or we will have to accept that God still speaks to His servants and the revelation is continuous.

The history of Ahmadiyya Khilafat bears witness that Allah has always assisted the hand of khalifah. Under the divine leadership of Khilafat, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is growing by leaps and bounds. Thousands of mosques, over 70 translations of Holy Qur'an in different languages, commencement of international TV channels, thousands of devotees of Islam, mission houses in all parts of the world, are but a few examples of divine guidance made possible due to the institution of Khilafat. The community has gone through some tough times as well. But the presence of a khalifah keeps the community steadfast and helps them act with patience and perseverance. None of this would have been possible if the institution of Khilafat was absent.

The concept of revelation may be mystifying to those who do not have a direct relationship with God, but for Ahmadi Muslims it is a journey towards the living God. Some choose to lag behind in the journey, while others take the lead.

Holy Qur'an 4:70
Bahr Al Muhit, Vol 3 Page 287
Holy Qur'an 41:31-32
Holy Qur'an 86:13
Holy Qur'an 22:64
Freud in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, June 12th, 1900



NATURE OF DREAMS AND VISIONS AS REVELATION

By Zia H Shah MD

Whatever limitations a recent biography of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), by Lesley Hazelton, a British-American writer whose work focuses on the intersection of politics, religion, and history, especially in the Middle East, titled,

The First Muslim: The Story of Muhammad, may have, it would be extreme prejudice to deny that she has beautifully elaborated the very first vision and the beginning of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an in the cave of Hira, near Mecca, with exquisite reasoning



The first chapter of her book is available online. Here I want to share with you her wonderful analysis of the very first revelation of the Prophet Muhammad, in the cave of Hira, a place preserved till date, unlike the site of revelations of any of the previous prophets:

A human encounters the divine: to the rationalist, a matter not of fact but of wishful fiction. So if Muhammad had behaved the way one might expect after his first encounter on Mount Hira, it would only make sense to call the story just that: a fable concocted by piety and belief. But he did not.

He did not come floating off the mountain as though walking on air. He did not run down shouting "Hallelujah" and "Bless the Lord." He did not radiate light and joy. There were no choirs of angels, no music of the heavens. No elation, no ecstasy, no golden aura surrounding him. No sense of his absolute, foreordained, unquestionable role as the messenger of God.

Not even the whole of the Quran fully revealed, but only a few brief verses. In short, Muhammad did none of the things that might seem essential to the legend of a man who had just done the impossible and crossed the border between this world and another—none of the things that might make it easy to cry foul, to denigrate the whole story as an invention, a cover for something as mundane as delusion or personal ambition.

On the contrary: he was convinced that what he had encountered could not be real. At best it must be a hallucination: a trick of the eye or the ear, or his own mind working against him. At worst, possession, and he had been seized by an evil jinn, a spirit out to deceive him, even to crush the life out of him. In fact he was so sure that he could only be majnun, literally possessed by a jinn, that when he found himself still alive, his first instinct had been to finish the job himself, to leap off the highest cliff and escape the terror of what he had experienced by putting an end to all experience.

So the man who fled down Mount Hira trembled not with joy but with a stark, primordial fear. He was overwhelmed not with conviction, but by doubt. He was sure of only one thing: whatever this was, it was not meant to happen to him. Not to a middle-aged man who had hoped perhaps at most for a simple moment of grace instead of this vast blinding weight of revelation. If he no longer feared for his life, he certainly feared for his sanity. By his own account, he was painfully aware that too many nights in solitary meditation might have driven him over the edge.

The Prophet received the first few verses of Sura number 96 of the Holy Quran in his first revelation:

*Convey thou in the name of thy Lord Who created,
Created man from a clot of blood.
Convey! And thy Lord is Most Generous,
Who taught man by the pen,
Taught man what he knew not.
(Al Quran 96:2-6)*

Lesley Hazelton continues the defense of this first revelation of the Holy Quran in the following words:

Whatever happened up there on Mount Hira, the sheer humanness of Muhammad's reaction may be the strongest argument for its historical reality. Whether you think the words he heard came from inside himself or from outside, it is clear that Muhammad experienced them, and with a force that would shatter his sense of himself and his world. Terror was the sole sane response. Terror and denial. And if this reaction strikes us now as unexpected, even shockingly so, that is only reflection of how badly we have been misled by the stereotyped image of ecstatic mystical bliss.

Lay aside such preconceived notions for a moment, and you might see that Muhammad's terror speaks of real experience. In fact it sounds fallibly human — too human for some, like conservative Muslim theologians who argue that the account of his trying to kill himself should not even be mentioned despite the fact that it's in the earliest Islamic biographies. They insist that he never doubted for a single moment, let alone despaired. Demanding perfection, they cannot tolerate ordinary human imperfection.

Let us accept Lesley Hazelton's description on face value and in this article, let us try to understand this vision, this experience, the par excellence of all dreams and visions, in scientific terms?

Not to speak of visions and dreams, we have very limited understanding of our consciousness, our thoughts, our emotions, our very being continues to be shrouded in mystery. In philosophy of mind, 'dualism' is the position that mental phenomena are, in some respects, non-physical, or that the mind and body are not identical. Thus, it encompasses a set of views about the relationship between mind and matter, and is contrasted with other positions, such as physicalism, in the mind-body problem. The mind-body problem in philosophy examines the relationship between mind and matter, and in particular the relationship between consciousness and the brain. The problem was famously addressed by René Descartes in the 17th century, resulting in Cartesian dualism. Dualism is closely associated with the philosophy of René Descartes (1596-1650), which holds that the mind is a nonphysical substance. Descartes clearly identified the mind with consciousness and self-awareness and distinguished this from the brain as the seat of intelligence. Hence, he was the first to formulate the mind-body problem in the form in which it exists today.



The Holy Qur'an predicted that humans will have only limited understanding of soul or consciousness, but, how limited is limited? René Descartes after a series of dreams coined this limitation in the scientific arena. His dreams were pivotal in setting the scientific revolution on the right footing. In the subsequent centuries by focusing on physical stuff and taking mental stuff for granted, we have had our Newtonian and Einsteinian physics, which has indeed given us our wonderful technology.



But, the mind-body problem continues to be real and Descartes' Dualism continues to be right, even though in view of the remarkable success of science and technology, this issue has been pushed away from general consciousness. Nevertheless, according to several experts in the field of consciousness, including Daniel Robinson and Joseph Levine, "in the foreseeable future consciousness will remain a mystery!"

For additional details on the subject of human soul and human consciousness, search for an article by me, Human Soul: The Final Frontier? in the Muslim Times.

But, we do have some understanding of biology of sleep and dreams.

Common sense understanding of sleep is that it is a period of inactivity of brain. But, since 1953, when dreaming or REM sleep was discovered, we know that it is very far from the truth. In REM sleep human brain is as active as in the awake state, if not more; just the activity is of a different kind.

REM sleep in adult humans typically occupies 20–25% of total sleep, about 90–120 minutes of a night's sleep. During a normal night of sleep, humans usually experience about four or five periods of REM sleep; they are quite short in the beginning of the night and longer towards the end. Many of the muscles are normally paralyzed during this sleep so that the subjects do not act out their dreams and cause injury to themselves or their bed partners. The phenomenon of REM sleep and its association with dreaming was discovered by Eugene Aserinsky and Nathaniel Kleitman with assistance from William C. Dement, a medical student at the time, in 1952 during their tenures at the University of Chicago. Numerous studies have suggested that REM and NREM sleep are important for consolidation of different kinds of memories and learning.

The three states of human existence, wakefulness, NREM and REM sleep have different physiological features, some of which are exclusive to them. Sometimes, in health or disease, features of one state can intrude into another. This gives us insight into the physical aspects of revelation, while awake. Revelation should be thought of as intrusion of dreaming of REM state into the state of full wakefulness.



A commonly known manifestation of intrusion of one state into another that most of the perceptive adult population has witnessed or at least heard about is sleep walking, which is intrusion of some features of awake state into NREM sleep. Sleepwalkers arise from the slow wave sleep stage in a state of low consciousness and perform activities that are usually performed during a state of full consciousness. These activities can be as benign as sitting up in bed, walking to the bathroom, and cleaning, or as hazardous as cooking, driving, violent gestures, grabbing at hallucinated objects, or even homicide.

In a fashion, similar to sleep walking, intrusion of dreaming without its accompaniment lack of total awareness, in the awake state, should be considered as a biological model for revelation.

But, how are we to understand true dreams or true revelations, like the ones of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be on him, mentioned in the very beginning of the article?

True dreams or visions differ from the ordinary dreams, in as far as the content of the true dreams is beyond the capabilities of the human mind, to whom such true dreams, visions or revelations are bestowed.

The finite human mind certainly falls short of understanding the 'Infinite' and the revelation from the All Knowing God, by its very nature, cannot be demystified into physical or biological terms.

The Holy Qur'an says,

***"Eyes cannot reach Him but He reaches the eyes.
And He is the Incomprehensible, the All-Aware."
(Al Qur'an 6:104)***

Nevertheless, Quantum physics does provide us a metaphor for understanding, to a small degree, the meeting of the 'Infinite' with finite and for Providence of God.

The same metaphor of Quantum physics is useful in understanding, how true dreams from God can be distinguished from ordinary dreams. Space does not allow me to write about quantum physics here, so I request the reader to search for an article, Demystifying Quantum Physics: You Need it for Your Faith, in the Muslim Times.



HOLY QUR'AN REVEALED BOOK

By Imam Rizwan Khan

Hadrat Musleh Ma'ud (ra) describes how the order of the Holy Qur'an is one of its distinctive features as the revealed word of God, a summary of which is as follows:

One distinctive feature of the Holy Qur'an, as the word of God, is that its order is very different from the order found in ordinary books. Man-made books organize their chapters by subject. For example, ablution would be discussed in one chapter, then worship in another, then marriage in another, etc. However, in revealed books, the order is very different, to the point that ignorant people object that there is no order in this book at all. The question arises, why is the order found in revealed books so different from all other books?

1. This order is used to create fear of Allah. For example, if we were taught first how to observe ablution and its actions and then prayer and its actions, it would not have created fear of Allah in our hearts. Rather, when Allah Almighty presents these topics in the Holy Qur'an, they are introduced in the context of the fear of Allah. The very purpose of these actions is righteousness, and when righteousness is achieved, man is already prepared to accept these teachings. If the Holy Qur'an had a separate chapter for each subject, the fear of Allah could not have been created.

2. This order is used to develop the habit of reflection. If each subject had been presented separately, we would not have reflected on how all of these subjects are related to one another and intertwined. We would have read only the chapters on subjects we were interested in. Thus, we would have remained ignorant of subjects outside of our interest and unaware of their relationship with other subjects. However, the order of the Holy Qur'an invites us to reflect on how all of these subjects are deeply connected with one another. Thus, by reading the Holy Qur'an, we acquire both a depth and a diversity of knowledge that would not have otherwise been possible.



Thus, since the primary objective of the Holy Qur'an is to reform its reader, it does not use the order found in ordinary books, rather, it uses an order that is in tune with one's emotions. For example, in an ordinary book organized by subjects, after mention of ablution, prayer would be mentioned. However, in the Holy Qur'an, since an underlying wisdom of ablution is the emotions connected with it, ablution is mentioned with spiritual purity and nearness to God. Similarly, with mention of prayer, an ordinary book organized by subjects would start explaining the actions of prayer. However, the Holy Qur'an brings our attention to the emotions associated with bowing and prostrating before God, and these emotions are used to bring us closer to Him.

Hence, the order of the verses of the Holy Qur'an is based on the emotions of the heart. There is a story that illustrates one aspect of how the waves of these emotions flow.

The mullah of a Mosque once came to lead prayer. He noticed that his congregation that day was wealthy. During prayer, he began thinking, "If they give me gifts, I will accumulate a great deal of money. Then, I will use it to buy merchandise. I will take it to Delhi for trade, and then many other cities." After that, he started planning how he would trade his growing wealth in foreign markets, and continued imagining on these lines. Although apparently he was bowing and prostrating, his mind was off somewhere else. A certain saint was a part of the congregation, and the thoughts of the mullah were revealed to him in a vision. On this, he broke his prayer and sat down on the side. When the prayer was finished, the mullah became

angry and reprimanded him, saying that it is not permitted to unnecessarily break one's prayer. The saint said, "I know this, but my health is weak. I went up to Delhi with you, and to another city as well, but then I became tired and was left behind because I cannot bear such long journeys."

These were useless thoughts that came to the mind of a mullah, but they still illustrate how the order of his thoughts was in accordance with the emotions of his heart. This same order is found in righteous thoughts as well. For example, if we say alhamdulillah, the favors of God Almighty will start appearing before us one after another and we will become lost in gratitude to Him for those blessings. Our emotions will run on a certain spiritual line. The order of the Holy Qur'an is based on the waves of the emotions in the heart. Allah Almighty knows what thoughts will arise in our minds after reading a certain verse, and He describes them in the following verses. Thus, the order of the Holy Qur'an is based on the emotions that are created while reciting the Holy Qur'an.

However, an inevitable result of this is that those who do not read the Holy Qur'an with love and sincerity find it confusing and tasteless. Since they think each subject has no connection with the other, they wonder why the subject jumps from one topic to another, and they cannot understand how they can be connected. However, if the same book is handed to a scholar, he is overwhelmed by its beauty.

Hadrat Musleh Ma'ud (ra) has thus described the uniqueness of the order of the Holy Qur'an in "Tafseer-e-Kabeer" vol 7 pg 519-521, a summary of which has been presented above. Based on this, we can begin to see how we can delve into this ocean of knowledge.

One way to understand the wisdom in the order of the Holy Qur'an is to look at it as similar to a conversation. When we are talking to a close friend, our

conversation flows from one topic to another. A child who listens to a part of our conversation may think that we are changing subjects arbitrarily, but only we would understand how each subject leads to the other. We have probably experienced that sometimes, a third person who does not know the context of our discussion will interrupt to give his input, unaware that his opinion is completely unrelated to what was actually being discussed. In that situation, only we know how the subjects we are discussing are intertwined with the topic on which we started the discussion.

Thus, to understand the wisdom of the order of the Holy Qur'an, we should try to bring our mind in line with the context in which Allah Almighty is describing various subjects. We should let our emotions be carried in the direction He is guiding them towards and try to find the intimate conversation between man and God hidden between the lines.

Another way to understand the Holy Qur'an is to use the same common sense we use when reading human literature. Allah Almighty has explained Islam in the Holy Qur'an through stories, poetic verses, analogies, symbolism; every type of verbal communication has been used to articulate this message in the most effective and beautiful way. When we read narratives by great authors, we search for the deeper meanings behind their tales knowing that they are not simply relating meaningless stories. When we read the poetry of great poets, we delve into the deeper meanings of each couplet and find how each analogy and expression is used to describe the central theme of the poem in a new light. However, when reading the Holy Qur'an, some critics leave this common sense at the door and object without realizing that these same criticisms raise greater objections against every piece of historic literature that humanity lauds as being great works of art. In the same way that we gain a glimpse of the beauty of Allah Almighty through the wisdom in His creation, we can gain a glimpse of the beauty of the Holy Qur'an through the wisdom in literature that humanity has produced through its God-given capacities.

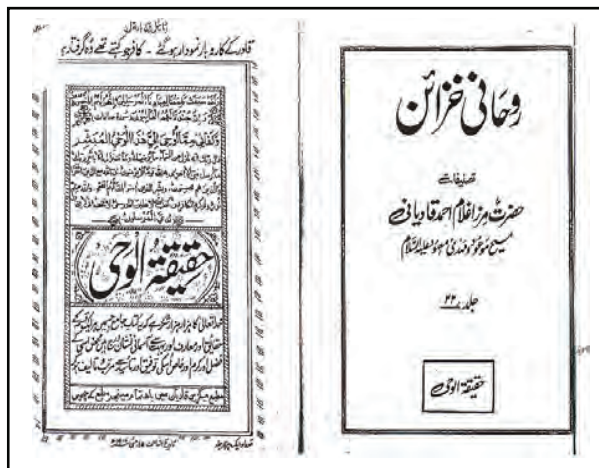
The Holy Qur'an, as the word of God, is a most unique book. In it, various styles of expression have been used according to the needs of the subjects under discussion. Where poetry is needed, it is found, where detailed commands are needed, they are found, where analogies are needed, they are found, where legal language is needed, it is found. Every style that is used is used to perfection, and is simultaneously found in a purposeful order that moves the heart to love for Allah.



WHAT IS REVELATION?

Extracts from *Haqiqat-ul-Wahi*
by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)

By Lubna R. Malik



Let it be clear that man has been created with the ultimate purpose to recognize his Creator. Man is supposed to have full awareness of his Creator and to understand His attributes to a level that his cognizance reaches a degree of certainty.

In 1907, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Promised Messiah, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian published his book "*Haqiqat-ul-Wahi*" ("The Reality/Truth of Revelation"), which focuses on the purpose of man's creation—to recognize and understand his Creator, God Almighty. This book was begun in 1906 and is written mostly in Urdu, but a small portion is in Arabic. In this book, the Promised Messiah (as) discusses the existence of God, the purpose of revelations, the types of revelations, how revelations prove God's existence, how one can achieve a status of receiving revelations, some of the revelations he has received, responses to various allegations against Islam (including those related to Pandit Lekhram) and responses to various allegations against Promised Messiah (as) (related to Dr. Alexander Dowie, shirk, prophethood and the Second Messiah).

Regarding the import of revelations and signs from God, the Promised Messiah (as) writes:

God is Light, as He states, 'Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth'. (24:36) A person who only sees the outward signs of this Light is like that person who sees smoke from a distance but does not see the light of the fire and remains

deprived of the benefits of this Light as well as from its heat which burns the foulness of humanness.

In his discussion on the types of revelations, the Promised Messiah (as) discusses dreams and visions. He explains that dreams come to both good and bad people and God causes these dreams so man believes in God's existence by experiencing God's signs. God offers this route to Him to all types of people. The Promised Messiah (as) explains that seeing true dreams from God does not require a certain age, wisdom, affiliation with a particular faith or a level of righteousness—God has simply created the brain to receive such dreams to recognize the existence of God because God wants to help His creation reach Him.

In another part of the book, the Promised Messiah (as) discusses how to distinguish between revelations from God versus revelations from Satan. The Promised Messiah (as) explains that Satanic revelations come to those who are Satan's friends (e.g., liars, sinners, etc.). Those who have a pure heart, love God and turn their backs on the worldly pleasures are the friends of God and Satan cannot reach them. Satan's revelations, unlike those from God, are like those from a deaf and mute person who cannot provide any comfort, wisdom or miracles. The Promised Messiah (as) compared the two types of revelations by saying that God's revelations are like an ocean and Satan's revelations are as valueless as a drop of water. Additionally, Satan's revelations are false and have no truth to them. To distinguish whether a dream or revelation is from God or Satan, the Promised Messiah (as) explains that one must (1) reflect on his own habits and if the habits are good, then God will speak to him; and if the habits are bad, then Satan will speak to him; and (2) reflect on the type of revelation because if it is one isolated revelation that does not become true and is not in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, then it is not from God; but if the revelation is one of many revelations that prove to be true and is in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, then such a revelation is from God. Regarding the fulfillment of revelations or signs, the Promised Messiah (as) explains:

Some signs are such that there is not even a minute's delay in their fulfillment. They are fulfilled instantly.

For example, the Promised Messiah (as) discusses his own numerous revelations by saying:

God has shown so many signs in my support that if I were to count them one by one up to this day [July 16, 1906], I can swear by God that they are in excess of 300,000. And if someone does not believe in my oath, I can provide him with proof.

The Promised Messiah (as) explains that when a person moves one step to God, then God will move two much larger steps towards that person. Explaining this process of gaining nearness to God, the Promised Messiah (as) gives the example of a match and fire. When a match is in fire, its innate ability to burn is increased in intensity and becomes stained by the fire and adopts the characteristics of the fire it is immersed in, such as heat, flame and light. This is the same process that takes place when a person moves closer to God. The Promised Messiah (as) explains:

God Almighty deals with everyone according to one's relationship with Him. Though the loved ones of God also suffer hardships, Divine help and succor is still clearly on their side, and He, in His honor, never allows them to be humiliated and disgraced. ... [T]he very essence of miracles is that when a man, with all his being, becomes God's, and no intervening veil is left between him and his Lord, and he completes all the stages of loyalty and truthfulness which remove the veil, he then becomes heir to God and His powers, and God Almighty shows all kinds of signs.

The Promised Messiah (as) cautions, however, that such a person who is completely immersed in the love of God should not be mistaken as God Himself, he is simply godly and is showered with God's blessings. Regarding this showering of blessings from God, the Promised Messiah (as) recounts an incident from his life where he suffered a severe toothache:

I ... couldn't find a moment's peace. I inquired of someone if there was any cure, but he told me that the only cure for an aching tooth was to remove it. But this I shrank from. I was sitting on the floor feeling quite restless and there was a bedstead nearby when I felt a little drowsiness coming over me. In my restlessness, I placed my hand on the foot of the bedstead and fell asleep for a while. When I woke up there was no sign of the toothache and this revelation was on my lips: 'When you fall ill, it is He that heals'.

Another example that the Promised Messiah (as) gives regarding how God showered blessings upon him relates to his son, Mirza Mubarak Ahmad. When his son was two years old, his son suffered from a severe fever. The Promised Messiah (as) sat near his son and prayed to God for his son's health. As he was doing this, a person sitting near the child said that the child had died. The Promised Messiah (as) continued to pray in spite of this news that his son had apparently died because he had unwavering faith in God. The Promised Messiah (as) then put his hand over the body of his son and his son awoke and his fever was gone.

In another incident, another son of the Promised Messiah (as), Mirza Sharif Ahmad, was suffering from typhoid. The Promised Messiah (as) became concerned that his son was on the brink of death because he did not want to lose his son and because the Promised Messiah (as) had received a revelation prior to his son's sickness that whoever was in Promised Messiah's (as) protection, God would also protect that person. Thus, if his son died, then the enemies of Ahmadiyyat might point a finger and say that the Promised Messiah (as) had received a false revelation and even his own son was not safe. Distraught about these concerns, the Promised Messiah (as) prayed to God and received a revelation that his son was healthy. After this revelation, his son sat up on his bed and asked for water and when Promised Messiah (as) touched his son to check if he was still ill, there was not even a hint of a fever.

The Promised Messiah (as) explains that these revelations and miracles that he experienced were the same kind or miracles that Jesus (as) had experienced. He also explains that if someone were to pray for a group of sick people and the Promised Messiah (as) were to pray for a similar group of sick people, more people in the group that Promised Messiah (as) prayed for would be healed and healthy because of his connection with God Almighty.

In another part of the book, the Promised Messiah (as) discusses the allegation from some enemies that believing in Tauheed, or the Unity of God, was sufficient to achieve Paradise, and that belief in any of the prophets was unnecessary. The Promised Messiah (as) responds from many angles. One point is that God created prophets for the specific purpose of showing people the Unity of God because humans cannot fathom God without seeing God's Signs. Through the prophets, people are able to understand God's signs and, thus, recognize His existence and Unity. Thus, belief in prophets is required because that is the path to seeing the Unity of God. The Promised Messiah (as) writes:

The Unity of God is a light which illumines the heart only after the negation of all deities, whether they belong to the inner world or the outer world. It [the Unity of God] permeates every particle of man's being. How can this be acquired without the aid of God and His Messenger?

Another point the Promised Messiah (as) makes is that God revealed to Moses (as) that a prophet would come in the latter days and would bring a law for the entire world—if only the Unity of God was sufficient for Paradise, then can we say that God lied to Moses (as)? God forbid.

In conclusion, God Almighty speaks to His beloveds through a variety of means and proves their truthfulness to the whole world. The example of how God Almighty proved this to be true for the Promised Messiah (as) should assuage any doubts anyone has regarding this fact. The Promised Messiah (as) writes:

If someone were to object, 'Where are the miracles you speak of?', I would not merely say that I can show them, rather, by the Grace of God, I would say that God has shown so many miracles in order to prove the truth of my claim that few are the prophets who have shown so many miracles. The truth is that He has caused a river of miracles to flow and—with the sole exception of our Holy Prophet (saw)—it is impossible to find categorical evidence of so many miracles being shown by any of the past prophets (as). For His part, God has incontrovertibly established the point. It is now up to the people to accept it or not.

God Almighty has not yet ceased to show the signs of His help and succor. And I swear by His name that He will not rest until He has demonstrated my truthfulness to the whole world. Listen all of you who can hear me! Be fearful of God and do not transgress the limits set by Him. Were this a human scheme, God would have destroyed me and not a trace of my Jama'at would have been left. But you have seen how Divine help and succor continue to be with me. So many signs have been manifested for me as defy counting. ... O creatures of God! Do pause and think, is this the way God deals with liars?

My Powerful God, hear my humble prayers and open the ears and hearts of this people. Show us the time when the worship of false deities should disappear from the world and Thou shouldst be worshipped sincerely in the earth. The earth might be filled with Thy righteous servants who believe in Thy Unity as the ocean is filled with water and the greatness and truth of Thy Messenger Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be on him, might be established in the hearts of people. Amen. My Powerful God, show me this change in this world and accept my prayers for Thou has all power and strength. Amen, O Powerful God.



Lubna R. Malik is an active member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. She is a regular writer for The Muslim Sunrise. Professionally, Lubna received her bachelor's degree from Princeton University in Public Policy, during which she also studied Human Rights at Oxford University, and she received her law degree from the University of Chicago Law School. She is currently a corporate lawyer at a premier international law firm. Her practice focuses primarily on corporate mergers and acquisitions and capital markets transactions, and she also contributes a significant portion of her time to a variety of pro bono matters, such as minority voting rights, mentoring at risk youth and immigration.

Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, pp. 7-8.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 23, p. 14.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, pp. 398-399.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, pp. 70-71.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, p. 53.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, pp. 246-247.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, p. 148.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, p. 574.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, p. 554.
 Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain, vol. 22, p. 164.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Word of God or Man?

By Andleeb Shams Ahmed

Each religion today relies on its holy book, whether it is the Torah for Judaism, the Holy Qur'an for Islam, or the Bible for Christianity. These books, which supposedly carry the words of God, are crucial and dire for any believing person. The New Testament carries the most burdens for Christians, in laying out what God and Jesus had intended for the people, but are these words truly the words of God? Many Christian scholars agree that the actual words are not from God Himself, but instead the New Testament is filled with writings that were inspired from God. If we just look at several writings from the New Testament, then it can easily be seen if the words truly are from God or not.

Christian scholars agree that the writings in the New Testament are NOT the words of God Himself, yet they are quite adamant that all the writings were inspired by God. Having said that, being inspired by God does not mean spoken by God. This is a difference which absolutely must be taken into consideration. Just because someone was sent by God and inspired by Him does not mean that the writings of such an individual was at the same time directly spoken by the Mouth of God.



Only a writing that is written by Jesus (as) himself or God can be absolutely said to be written directly by the Hand of God. Now since Jesus (as) himself did not write anything down and since all the prophets of the Bible were nothing but human beings themselves, then it must be averred that all the writings of the Bible could be considered only as God-inspired, but not directly written by the Hand of God.

Only that which is directly written by God's Hand can be said to be free of errors and to be absolutely true in every way. All the other works are prone to all the errors and to be absolutely true in every way. All the other works are prone to all the errors that human beings are prone: poor memory, forgetfulness, lack of understanding, etc. This is not to say that these works are not of value. For Christians, they present great value, but with the caveat that sometimes the works were interpretations written down decades after the passing away of the original person bringing the words of God—Jesus (as).

The words of the New Testament were written down by those who were not direct eyewitnesses, especially since most of the authors did not even know Jesus (as) personally. Even those who claimed to be eyewitnesses had different interpretations and historical facts, making it seem harder to believe that these words were even inspired by God Himself.

Just because the actual words of the New Testament are not the exact words of God Himself, doesn't mean that they weren't inspired by Him. All religious prophets, Muhammad (sa), Buddha (as), Krishna (as), etc., had their holy books written by men. So the same questions can arise with the other religious books as well. However, most of those books don't have as many contradictions as the Holy Bible does. And it is mostly in Christianity, where there are members who question the authors and their inspiration. The same cannot be said for most other religions. For example, most Christians do not believe in the literal inspiration (word for word) as Muslims do. They believe that if God wants to tell humans some of His secrets, He would inspire a chosen writer to write the chapter. Then He will support the writer and inspire him to choose the events, situations, deeds and words, which He wants for His servants' benefits. God also will be the writer's mentor and guide, and He will protect him from any mistake or shortcoming, and to write only what God has inspired him to write...this is enough to attribute the book to God."

Wikipedia itself claims that the New Testament is an anthology, a collection of Christian works written in the common language of the first century, at different times by various writers. Nowhere does it state that the words are actually from God Himself. However, there are examples of the same message from God, but written by different people at different times:

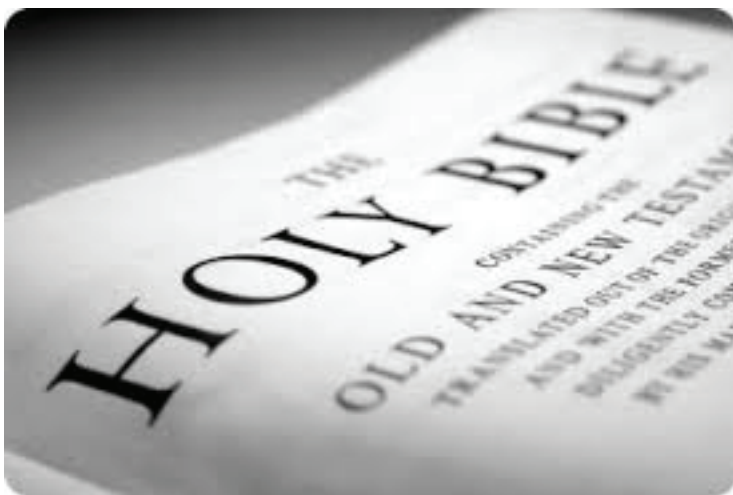
Isaiah 40:8—"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Matthew 24:35—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

1 Peter 1:25—"But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

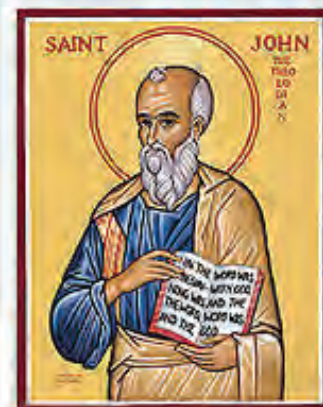
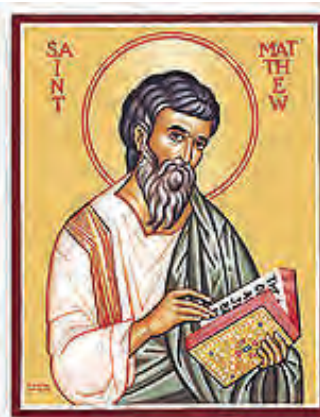
These verses are not just similar, but they reaffirm that these are actual words and messages from God Himself, Who wanted His words preserved forever. But once again, the mystery remains the same—Why are there so many different interpretations and why so many contradictions? If God wanted many to convey His message, why would He let so many discrepancies and questions arise from His words?

We do need to break down a few chapters of the New Testament to see how accurate they were and could they actually be Divine messages.



The first part of the New Testament consists of the Gospels, which are narrative accounts of what happened with Jesus (as) and also contains quotes made by Jesus (as), who Christians regard as the Son of God. Most Christians say that the Gospels are based on eyewitness testimony.

In fact, the faith of Christianity relies heavily on the Gospels and New Testament. There are four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first three are known as the "Synoptic" Gospels. This is because many episodes in them are similar enough that all three Gospels can be put together in one book, or synopsis, and textual differences compared. The Gospel of John is considered to be different because it has unique stories in it and never discusses Jesus' (as) birth or ascension to heaven. Historians and theologians have argued for centuries on when exactly the Gospels were written. The one fact that everyone agrees on is that the Gospels were definitely not written during the time of Jesus (as). They were written decades after his "ascension" from earth. These Gospels are recorded in history to be written 50 to 90 years after the crucifixion of Jesus (as). If God wanted His word to be spread, wouldn't He allow someone right then and there to 1. Write down His words, ultimately becoming law and commandment and 2. Save His son?



The Gospels are not written by eyewitness accounts or Jesus' (as) apostles. When comparing the texts, Matthew and Luke were written after Mark and seem to have used Mark as a written source. Of the 661 verses in Mark's Gospel, Matthew's Gospel used about 607 of them and Luke used about 360. Matthew claimed to be an eyewitness of the life of Jesus (as), but then why would an eyewitness like Matthew need to use ninety percent of somebody else's book? Luke, who claimed to be a companion of Paul (who never even met Jesus (as)) was obviously not an eyewitness. Even though Luke received his "information" from Paul, he still borrowed from other Gospels. If God is sending down His words and thoughts to either Luke or Paul, why the discrepancies? It's hard to believe that if God Himself is telling these people what His words are that they would so easily forget it. And then to have to rely on sources, who have never received word from God nor even met Jesus (as).

The Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark. He was not one of the 12 disciples, but he accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey. However, Mark was a close associate of Peter, from whom he received the traditions and sayings of Jesus (as). This gospel is actually the preaching of Peter, not first-hand witness accounts. His gospel even though is not presented as the first gospel, was written first. The other Gospels quote all but 31 verses of Mark.

Luke was a friend and companion of Paul. He also wrote Acts, and the two books go together. Luke actually received most of the traditions of Jesus (as) from Paul, who never met Jesus (as). In fact, Luke even admitted that he was not an eyewitness, but instead was writing the story that was passed down to him. According to the Gospel of Luke, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who were from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of this world." (Luke 1:1-2).

The four gospels are a major part of the New Testament; however, there is additional information on Jesus (as) in Acts and Corinthians. Although most Christians regard even the Gospels as words inspired by God, more importance goes to the additional chapters of the New Testament, especially when it comes to the authorship of Paul. Acts was written by Luke, and Corinthians was written by Paul. In fact, his claim to sainthood is based on "visions" he received from Jesus (as). His ideas of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus (as) heavily contradict the stories in the four Gospels. However, Paul is primarily given the credit for starting and spreading Christianity. And Christians believe in the words of Paul...as to them, they are the words of God. The four Gospel authors are redactors—they're editors with a theological agenda in a sense. They've taken other people's stories and omitted and inserted whatever they thought would help the spread of Christianity. Paul, on the other hand, has rarely been contested as the author of his writings. Paul cannot be considered to be a redactor because he did not take other's stories. He is more like an interpreter. An interpreter can change the meaning of words and give their opinion on what the words mean. Yet, once again, if these are the words of God, or even inspired by Him, then they should be exact, not up for interpretation, and definitely not contradictable.

This debate could and will go on for centuries. Any true believer in Christianity will always defend the words of the New Testament as God's writings. This is what we call "blind faith," which exists in all religions. It is ultimately up to each individual to keep seeking the truth and believing in the words presented to him—whether they're words from God, inspired from God, or from man himself.



Differences in the Translations of the Holy Bible, Ahmad Abdul Wahab, pp 91-92
 En.wikipedia.org/New Testament
 Michael Martin, The Case Against Christianity, pgs. 126-130.
 Lee Strobel, Case For Christ, pg. 76



AAOITH

SAYINGS OF THE **PROPHET** MUHAMMAD(sa)

Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said:

Seven will be sheltered under the safeguarding shade of Allah's mercy on the Day on which there will be no other shade beside the shade of His mercy: a just ruler; a youth who occupies himself with the worship of Allah, the Lord of honour and glory; one whose heart is ever suspended in the mosque; two who love each other for the sake of Allah, they come together for His sake and part for His sake; one who is called by a woman possessed of beauty and charm and declines, saying: I fear Allah; one who spends secretly in charity, so that his left hand does not know what his right hand spends; and one who remembers Allah in solitude so that his eyes brim over (Bokhari and Muslim). (Garden of the Righteous, Page 84-85)

Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said:

By Him in Whose hands is my life, you will not enter Paradise unless you believe, and you will not truly believe unless you love one another. Shall I tell you something whereby you will love one another? Multiply the greeting of peace among yourselves (Muslim). (Garden of the Righteous, Page 85)

Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said:

Allah, the Exalted, says: I challenge to battle him who bears enmity towards a friend of Mine. When a servant of Mine seeks nearness to Me, with that which I love, out of whatever I have prescribed, I begin to love him and when I love him, I become his ear with which he hears and his eyes with which he sees and his hand with which he grasps and his foot with which he walks, and when he begs Me for anything I bestow it upon him and when he seeks shelter with Me, I give him shelter (Bokhari). (Garden of the Righteous, Page 86)

Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said:

When Allah loves a servant, a call goes out to Gabriel: Allah, the Exalted, loves So and So, do thou love him also. Then Gabriel also loves him and sends a call through to the dwellers of the heavens: Allah loves So and So, do you also love him. Then the dwellers of the heaven love him also, and then he is accepted in the earth (Bokhari and Muslim). Muslim adds: When Allah is offended with a servant, He calls Gabriel and says to him: I am offended with So and So: and Gabriel is offended with him also. Then he sends a call through to the dwellers of the heaven: Allah is offended with So and So, do you be offended with him also. Thereafter aversion towards him is spread in the earth. (Garden of the Righteous, Page 86-87)



NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

March 7, 2014

**U.S. Congress Forms Bipartisan
"Ahmadiyya Muslim Caucus"**

First Bi-Partisan Muslim caucus will focus on the issue of global persecution of Ahmadi Muslims and other religious minorities

For the first time in Congressional history, the U.S. House of Representatives has formed a bipartisan caucus to work on the global issue of human and civil rights of Ahmadi Muslims. U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) and U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA) will co-chair the new "Ahmadiyya Muslim Caucus". Both representatives are strong supporters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and past recipients of the "Ahmadiyya Muslim Humanitarian Award" at the Community's annual U.S. convention.

"Ahmadiyya Muslims face persecution, human rights, and religious freedom abuses in countries around the world for simply practicing their faith," said U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier during the official launch ceremony on Friday, February 28, 2014, "In the United States, we all have basic freedoms, regardless of religious background, that are enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Religious intolerance is a worldwide threat that we must all diligently speak out against. I am proud to be co-chair of Ahmadiyya Muslim Caucus and will use this position to educate Congress and the public about the religious intolerance the community faces both here and abroad."

The caucus plans to seek redress for ongoing human rights violations against Ahmadi Muslims in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and East Asia, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia.

"I have long partnered with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, including here in Northern Virginia, and I am pleased to join with Congresswoman Speier as co-chair of the newly launched, bipartisan Ahmadiyya Muslim Caucus," said U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf. "The Ahmadiyya community is under threat in many parts of the world including in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia."

These human rights violations demand our attention. With the formation of this caucus, I look forward to continuing to shine a bright light on religious freedom abuses wherever they may occur."

Accept Ahmadiyya and go to Jail?

Source:HRW

(Beirut) – Saudi authorities should immediately release two citizens held without charge for two years because of their religious beliefs, Human Rights Watch said today. Officials arrested Sultan al-'Anzi, 33, and Sa'ud al-'Anzi, 35, on May 14, 2012, and have not responded to multiple requests from Human Rights Watch and an organization for the Ahmadiyya Muslim religious group for information on their whereabouts and condition.

Activists with knowledge of the case say that the two men had adopted the Ahmadiyya interpretation of Islam. Saudi religious authorities encouraged them to abandon their belief, and three months later, officials detained them. Human Rights Watch wrote to King Abdullah on August 13, 2012, urging him to order the men's release, but received no response.

"Not only have Saudi authorities interfered with the personal beliefs of these two men, but they've left them sitting in jail for two years in legal limbo with no end in sight," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "The kingdom's repression of religious dissidents stains its human rights record."

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

A Sect in Islam flees from its own country – why?
Lanka Web: by A. Abdul Aziz.

Pakistan made history in 1974 by becoming the first country in the world to amend its constitution to declare Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslim. Thirty years ago, in 1984, Ordinance XX was enacted making it a criminal offence for Ahmadis to call themselves Muslims, a 'crime' punishable by 3 years imprisonment. Under Pakistan's notorious anti-Ahmadi laws and blasphemy laws extremist violence has flourished with Ahmadi Muslims, Shia Muslims, Christians, Hindus and others massacred on simply grounds of faith.

The laws have resulted in:

■ Hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims being killed on grounds of faith: In May 2010, a deadly attack on two Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore left 86 people dead.

■ Mosques destroyed: Ahmadi mosques have been attacked, defaced and closed by the authorities.

■ Voting rights denied: Laws prevent Ahmadi Muslims from voting unless they declare themselves as non-Muslims.

■ No dignity after death: Mobs and police have destroyed and defaced Ahmadi graves.

■ Millions live in fear and tens of thousands have been forced to flee the country to escape persecution.

■ Hundreds have been murdered in cold blood by extremists.

■ Homes, businesses, mosques and grave yards are routinely attacked and thousands – including children – have been charged under Pakistan's infamous laws.

■ No one has ever been prosecuted for



Read more: www.themuslimtimes.org

United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations
Washington, D.C.
May 22, 2014



Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:
 Thank you for inviting me to testify today on the subject of "Protecting Religious Freedom: U.S. Efforts to Hold Accountable Countries of Particular Concern."

I am a Muslim-American attorney residing in Los Angeles. In my private practice, I litigate complex business and commercial matters for an international law firm. In my pro bono practice, I represent refugees escaping persecution. I have studied international and human rights law at Harvard Law School (where I graduated in 2004) and have written about the global persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and surrounding issues for prominent legal journals and national newspapers. I have testified before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform about the global persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and the vital importance of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. I also volunteer as the National Director of Public Affairs for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA and provide my testimony today in that capacity.

I have divided my testimony into two main areas: first, I will discuss several recent disturbing developments in the ongoing persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, a country of particular concern to our Community; and second, I will explain how the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, and specifically the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, has benefitted our Community.

I. INTRODUCTION TO AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Before I delve into these two areas, allow me to briefly introduce our Community.

Founded in 1889, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a revivalist movement within Islam. Ahmadi Muslims believe in the Kalima (the principal creed of a Muslim) and espouse the motto of "Love for all, hatred for none." As a central tenet of its faith, the Community rejects terrorism for any and all reasons. When

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violent extremists label their acts of terrorism as 'jihad,' they do so wrongly, and it is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community that is usually first and most forceful in its denunciation, focusing on both conveying true Islamic teachings to Muslims around the world as well as removing misconceptions of 'jihad' and Islam generally in the West. Today, our Community is established in more than 200 countries, and its tens of millions of adherents all follow the only spiritual caliph in the Muslim world, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who resides in London. The Community is the largest organized Muslim community with a single leader in the world.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is arguably the most persecuted Muslim community in the world. The U.S. State Department, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and dozens of human rights non-governmental organizations have documented the systematic persecution endured by our Community at the hands of religious extremists and state and quasi state institutions in numerous countries around the world, including Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya and Syria.

I. PAKISTAN

Today, I limit my focus to Pakistan, which has become a particularly disturbing long-term case study in religious intolerance.

A. Background and Legal Framework

While precise counts are difficult to establish, some researchers estimate that several million Ahmadi Muslims currently live in Pakistan. Ahmadi Muslims profess to be Muslims, but their belief is irrelevant under the law. This is because Pakistan is the only Islamic state in the world to define who is or is not a Muslim in its Constitution (Article 260). The Second Amendment to Pakistan's Constitution, passed in 1974, amends Article 260 to say:

"A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad, the last of the Prophets or claims to be a Prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad, or recognizes such a claimant as a Prophet or religious reformer, is not a Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution or law."

This amendment explicitly deprives members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of their right to self-identify as Muslims.

As has been well-chronicled by the International Community, since 1984, Pakistan

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has used its Criminal Code to prohibit and punish blasphemy. Blasphemy in Pakistan broadly refers to any spoken or written representation that “directly or indirectly” outrages the religious sentiments of Muslims. Five of Pakistan’s current penal code provisions punish blasphemy. These are collectively referred to as the “anti-blasphemy” laws.

Over the course of 30 years, several thousand individuals have been arrested under these laws. These individuals were Muslims (Sunnis, Shias and Ahmadis), Christians and Hindus. Their crimes ranged from wearing an Islamic slogan on a t- shirt to planning to build a Mosque to distributing Islamic literature in a public square to offering prayers in a Mosque to printing a wedding invitation card with Quranic verses to sending a text message perceived as critical of Islam. Their punishments ranged from fines to indefinite detention to life imprisonment to the death sentence. Although no one to date in Pakistan has been executed for blasphemy, at least 32 individuals have been killed by mobs after having been arrested for blasphemy.

The most notorious of Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws is a 50-word Penal Code Ordinance (called Section 295-C): “Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.”

Based on this remarkably broad language, virtually anyone can register a blasphemy case against anyone else in Pakistan, and the accused can face capital punishment. Thus, Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws have essentially criminalized the very existence of Ahmadi Muslims.

Two of the five anti-blasphemy laws explicitly target by name the activities of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. These two laws are part of what is known as Martial Law Ordinance XX, which amended Pakistan’s Penal Code and Press Publication Ordinance Sections 298-B and 298-C. For fear of being charged with “indirectly or directly posing as a Muslim,” Ahmadi Muslims cannot profess their faith, either verbally or in writing. Pakistani police destroyed Ahmadi translations of the Qur’an and banned Ahmadi publications, the use of any Islamic terminology on Ahmadi Muslim wedding invitations, the offering of Ahmadi Muslim funeral prayers, and the displaying of the Kalima (the principal creed of a Muslim) on Ahmadi Muslim gravestones. In addition, Ordinance XX prohibited Ahmadi Muslims from declaring their faith publicly, propagating their faith, building mosques or making the call for Muslim prayers. In short, virtually any public act of worship, devotion or propagation by an Ahmadi Muslim can be

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treated as a criminal offense punishable by fine, imprisonment or death.

Not surprisingly, having suffered under the anti-blasphemy laws for years, religious minorities in Pakistan have challenged the constitutionality of the anti-blasphemy laws under Article 20 of Pakistan’s Constitution. Unfortunately, however, the anti-blasphemy laws have withstood legal scrutiny.

Just a few years after the laws were passed, the Federal Shariat Court (the highest religious court in Pakistan) was asked to exercise its jurisdiction under Article 203D of the constitution to rule whether or not Ordinance XX was contrary to the injunctions of the Qur’an and Sunnah (practice of Prophet Muhammad). The court, in the case *Mujibur Rahman v. Government of Pakistan*, upheld the validity of Ordinance XX and ruled that parliament had acted within its authority to declare Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslims. Ordinance XX, the court maintained, merely prohibited Ahmadi Muslims from “calling themselves what they [were] not,” namely Muslims.

On July 3, 1993, the Supreme Court of Pakistan dismissed eight appeals brought by Ahmadi Muslims who were arrested under Ordinance XX and Section 295-C. The collective complaint in the case, *Zaheerudin v. State*, was that the 1984 Ordinance violated the constitutional rights of religious minorities. The court dismissed the complaint on two main grounds. First, the court held that Ahmadi Muslim religious practice, however peaceful, angered and offended the Sunni majority in Pakistan; to maintain law and order, Pakistan would, therefore, need to control Ahmadi Muslim religious practice. Second, Ahmadi Muslims, having been deemed to be non-Muslims by law, could not use Islamic epithets in public without violating company and trademark laws. Pakistan, the court reasoned, had the right to protect the sanctity of religious terms under these laws and the right to prevent their usage by non-Muslims. The court also pointed to the sacredness of religious terms under the shari’a. The remarkable ruling further entrenched the anti-Ahmadi ordinances by giving the government power to freely punish Ahmadi Muslim religious practice as apostasy.

In light of these twin court decisions by the highest judicial bodies in Pakistan, Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws remain a legitimate state-approved instrument for persecution of religious minorities. Religious minorities have no further legal recourse within Pakistan to overturn Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws.

B. High-Level Statistics

Allow me to share some eye-opening statistics:

- Many hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims have been murdered in Pakistan since

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it was founded. The past four years have been especially brutal with targeted killings of multiple family members and Ahmadi Muslim doctors, lawyers, religious leaders, businessmen and teachers. In 2010 alone, 99 Ahmadi Muslims were murdered in Pakistan – the deadliest year ever for the Community. This includes the murder of 86 Ahmadi Muslims (and hundreds more injured) on May 28, 2010 in a single attack in Lahore – one of Pakistan’s worst terrorist attacks ever.

- Since 1974, in contravention of their own beliefs, every single Ahmadi Muslim man, woman and child in Pakistan is declared to be “non-Muslim” by constitutional amendment.
- Since 1985, millions of Ahmadi Muslims cannot, by operation of law, fully and freely vote in national and provincial elections, and as of 2002, Ahmadi Muslims are the only religious group excluded from the nation’s joint electorate. Ahmadi Muslims can only vote in Pakistan if they (1) declare themselves to be a non-Muslim; (2) declare the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to be an imposter; and (3) add their names to a separate supplementary list.
- To date, 3,943 cases have been registered against Ahmadi Muslims under Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws. Ahmadi Muslims now account for almost 40% of all arrests under Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws.
- To date, Pakistani authorities have demolished, set on fire, forcibly occupied, sealed or barred the construction of over 90 Ahmadi Muslim mosques. They have also denied the cemetery burial of at least 41 Ahmadi Muslims and have exhumed after burial the bodies of at least 28 Ahmadi Muslims.¹

C. Recent Incidents of Persecution

To give you a holistic picture of the dire situation for Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, I will share a few more incidents of persecution in the past several years. I apologize in advance for their particularly disturbing nature.

Just last week in the Sheikhpura District, on May 13, six Ahmadi Muslims, including Mr. Khalil Ahmad, were arrested on suspicion of having committed

In the most recent case, extremists in Gojra, with the assistance of police, prevented a father from burying his deceased one-and-a-half-year-old daughter in a neighborhood graveyard because the father and his daughter were Ahmadi Muslims. See Express Tribune, “Consecrated Ground: Child Buried After Four Days,” available at: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/650632/consecrated-ground-child-buried-after-four-days/> (last visited on May 20, 2014).

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blasphemy. Apparently, a shopkeeper had posted insults about Ahmadi Muslims on an Islamic calendar that was posted in his shop. The Ahmadi Muslims asked the shopkeeper to remove the insults, and the shopkeeper registered blasphemy cases against all of them. Mr. Ahmad, along with the other Ahmadi Muslims, were subsequently taken into police custody at the Sharaqpur police station.

Just three days later, on May 16, while Mr. Ahmad was in police custody, a man walked into the police station with a gun. We are told that the gun was concealed in his lunch box. The police let him meet Mr. Ahmad, and the man shot and killed him point blank while inside the police lockup.² Reports suggest that he belonged to an Islamic seminary of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jama’at (ASWJ). The Community in Pakistan suspects that the police facilitated the killer’s entry and lethal act. Mr. Ahmad, who was 65-years-old, was killed because of his faith. He is survived by his widow, two daughters and two sons.

Last November, police in Lahore arrested 72-year-old Dr. Masood Ahmad, a Pakistan-British dual national, homeopathic physician and Ahmadi Muslim.³

Two men posing as patients visited Dr. Ahmad’s clinic in Lahore and began to ask questions about religion. They used a mobile phone to secretly film him reciting verses from the Holy Qur’an. Subsequently, they called the police in Lahore to arrest Dr. Masood for committing blasphemy and “outraging the religious sentiments of Muslims.” In the mind of the accusers, Dr. Masood’s public recitation of the Holy Qur’an was an unlawful blasphemous act.

Dr. Masood was subsequently arrested, imprisoned and charged for offenses under Section 295-C for “posing as a Muslim.” Significantly, he was denied bail and remained in prison for 65 days despite his age and poor health. Fortunately, an appeals court in Lahore overturned the denial of his bail, and he subsequently managed to escape Pakistan and returned to the United Kingdom.

Between February and March 2012, Master Abdul Qudoos, an Ahmadi Muslim school teacher and president of a local chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Chenab Nagar (a largely Ahmadi town that Ahmadi Muslims refer to as “Rabwah”), was falsely accused in a murder inquiry, arrested by local police, and held incommunicado for 35 days. During this time, senior police officers attempted to get him to sign a statement that falsely implicated leading officials of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the murder. When he refused to lie under

² See New York Times, “Pakistan: Boy Kills a Jailed Man Who Was Accused of Blasphemy,” May 16, 2014, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/17/world/asia/pakistan-boy-kills-a-jailed-man-who-was-accused-of-blasphemy.html?_r=0 (last visited on May 20, 2014).

³ See BBC News, “Jailed British Ahmadi Masood Ahmad in Pakistan blasphemy appeal,” available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25498545> (last visited May 20, 2014).

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oath, police hung him upside down by his ankles for long periods. They also forced him to lay flat on his back while a heavy wooden roller was rolled over his body. His captors stood on either side making sure he could not escape the torment. He was also subjected to senseless beatings and sleep deprivation. After torturing him, police authorities finally released him on March 26, 2012. Despite receiving medical treatment, Mr. Qudoos died on March 30, 2012, as a result of the injuries he sustained during the police torture. He is survived by his wife and four children. To date, authorities suspended six police officers but made no arrests in connection with Mr. Qudoos' murder.

In late January of 2012, some 5,000 people, including religious extremists and representatives from trade unions, gathered outside an Ahmadi Muslim mosque in Rawalpindi calling for the mosque's demolition and a ban of Ahmadi Muslim activities.⁴ At the rally, many protesters could be heard referring to Ahmadi Muslims as "wajib ul qatl" or "worthy of being killed." Local police authorities had failed to take affirmative measures to adequately safeguard Ahmadi Muslims or their mosque.

In June of 2011, the All-Pakistan Students Khatam-e-Nabuwat Federation widely distributed shocking anti-Ahmadi pamphlets in Faisalabad—one of Pakistan's largest cities.⁵ The pamphlets explicitly encouraged the outright assassination of a select group of Ahmadi Muslim industrialists, doctors and businessmen—who were listed by name and address and labeled as "wajib ul qatl" or "worthy of being killed." The pamphlets explicitly noted that an act of murder against an Ahmadi Muslim on the list would be deemed to be a "virtue" and a "blessing." When Ahmadi Muslim leaders brought the horrific content of the pamphlets to the attention of Faisalabad police authorities, the authorities refused to investigate or intervene. As a result, thousands of Ahmadi Muslims in Faisalabad continue to live in a state of perpetual fear with no adequate police protection. For example, the President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Faisalabad barely survived an assassination attempt by unidentified gunmen.

D. Recurring Patterns

Mr. Chairman, each of these incidents illuminates a few concerning patterns of persecution against Ahmadi Muslim in Pakistan: 4 See Amnesty International, "Pakistan Should Protect Ahmadiyya Community Against Threats of Violence," February 2, 2012, available at: <http://amnesty.org/en/news/pakistan-should-protect-ahmaddiya-community-against-threats-violence-2012-02-02> (last visited on May 20, 2014). 5 See Shamsul Islam, "Targeting Minorities: No Friends to Ahmadis in Pakistan," The Express Tribune, June 9, 2011, available at: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/185179/targeting-minorities-no-friend-to-ahmadis-in-faisalabad/> (last visited on May 20, 2014).

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- Police at the provincial and local levels routinely fail to provide adequate protection and safeguards for vulnerable Ahmadi Muslims, despite receiving adequate notifications and warning of imminent threats. In some extreme cases, police are complicit in the persecution, torture and ultimate murder of Ahmadi Muslims.

- Ahmadi Muslim professionals, including physicians, lawyers and teachers, are particularly targeted by extreme terrorist groups.

- The perpetrators of deadly attacks on Ahmadi Muslims are rarely arrested and charged for their criminal acts, and in some cases, are permitted to act with impunity and even given legal sanctuary and safe havens.

- Frivolous blasphemy cases are routinely registered against Ahmadi Muslims as a means to settle personal scores and business rivalries.

III. IMPORTANCE OF U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Against this troubling backdrop of persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 has proven to be a critical piece of legislation for our Community. The Act has helped to raise awareness within those countries in which Ahmadi Muslims, and indeed all religious minorities, face persecution, as well as in the United States, where organizations like the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom have advocated for the release of Ahmadi Muslim prisoners of conscience and the protection of their rights to practice their faith freely, and without fear of government or extremist reprisal. In my last few minutes, I would like to explain how the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in particular, has been a source of tremendous assistance for our Community.

First, USCIRF, supported by a highly knowledgeable and dedicated staff, has consistently monitored and reported on the deteriorating conditions of religious liberty for Ahmadi Muslims in the Islamic world. Each year, the Commission publishes an annual report, which is prepared through painstaking research and verification. As a religious freedom advocate and international human rights lawyer, I am acutely aware of how difficult it is to obtain accurate and reliable information about abuses committed by governments and other actors that operate under the cover of secrecy. Thus, advocates and practitioners place singular dependence on USCIRF's annual report as a source of detailed and verified information about infringements of religious liberty. For instance, the Commission's 2014 Annual Report carefully documents instances of targeted

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sectarian violence against Christians, Hindus and Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan. It further details what it labels "the unique legal repression of Ahmadis" in Pakistan, including disfiguration of Ahmadi mosques, the desecration of Ahmadi graves, and the disenfranchisement of Ahmadi voters.

Second, USCIRF has proved immeasurably valuable in raising awareness about particular cases of acute concern for Ahmadi Muslims. By way of example, earlier this spring the Commission, led by Chairman Dr. Robert George, urged President Obama during his visit to Saudi Arabia to raise religious freedom concerns and call for the release of prisoners of conscience. USCIRF specifically urged the President to press King Abdullah to release two Saudis, Sultan and Saud Al-Enezi, detained by that country's government for over two years, for becoming members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Saudi Arabia. As the case of the Ahmadi Muslim detainees in Saudi Arabia illustrates, USCIRF's independence allows it to shine a spotlight on abuses of religious freedom, even when other organs of our government may feel constrained by considerations of foreign policy or national security.

Similarly, USCIRF official delegations play an invaluable role in raising issues of religious liberty directly with foreign officials. Just recently, a USCIRF delegation visited Kazakhstan, where it met with both Kazakh government officials and religious communities to understand better the deteriorating climate for religious freedom in that country. As USCIRF noted in its 2014 Annual Report, Kazakhstan has used its restrictive 2011 religion law to deny religious groups, including Ahmadi Muslims, legal status.

Third, USCIRF consistently sees the big picture and formulates incisive policy recommendations designed to safeguard both religious liberty and broader U.S. policy goals. USCIRF has long been on the forefront of highlighting the association between lack of religious freedom and the presence of violent religious extremism. In Pakistan, the Commission notes in its most recent annual report, the government's enforcement of the blasphemy laws and related legislation fuel extremist violence threatening all Pakistanis, but particularly Christians and Ahmadi Muslims. USCIRF's findings and recommendations flow from its tireless work on the ground. For example, Commissioners and staff routinely travel to Pakistan and other hotspots to meet firsthand with those vulnerable religious communities that are suffering from infringement of their religious liberty.



In conclusion, let me say that the primary source of our Community's persecution is religious extremists who espouse a militant perversion of Islam. Our Community strongly believes that all such religious extremism must be cut at its root, and we welcome any and all efforts by the U.S. Government and U.S. Congress to redress global restrictions to international religious freedom. We particularly welcome the leadership of U.S. Representatives Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Jackie Speier (D-CA), Co-Chairs of the newly formed Ahmadiyya Muslim Caucus in the 113th Session of U.S. Congress. The International Religious Freedom Act, and the U.S. Commission that it has created, provide vital safeguards to protect fundamental universal human rights and redress gross human rights violations in countries of particular concern. Our Community whole-heartedly supports all efforts to sustain and perpetuate the Act's original mandate. Our Community stands ready to assist in this process

PRESS RELEASE
June 16, 2014

Militant Extremists in Pakistan Murder American Muslim Physician on Humanitarian Mission



Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar, a U.S. citizen and cardiologist, traveled from Columbus, Ohio to provide free cardiac care to the needy.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA today mourns the tragic passing of American physician and humanitarian, Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar. On May 26, 2014, Dr. Qamar, a 50-year old U.S. citizen and married father of three, was on Day 2 of a three-week medical mission in Rabwah, Pakistan, when militant extremists gunned him down in front of his wife and two-year-old son. Dr. Qamar was murdered because he was a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

In 1974, Pakistan passed a constitutional amendment declaring Ahmadi Muslims to be “non-Muslim.” In 1984, Pakistan passed anti-blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws criminalizing religious practices of Ahmadi Muslims, which are punishable by fine, imprisonment or capital punishment. To date, militant extremists have murdered hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan with impunity.

“Today, Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar, an American physician on a humanitarian mission has fallen victim to an unspeakable act of terrorism,” said Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah, National Vice President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA. “Pakistan’s state-facilitated persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has emboldened militant extremists to engage in horrific acts of violence against Ahmadi Muslims and other religious minorities. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community implores Pakistan to abide by international human rights commitments, repeal all hate-filled anti-blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws and provide adequate security and police protection for vulnerable religious communities. ”

As Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community will continue to respond to premeditated crimes against humanity with peace, education, and prayers—as it has for over 125 years. As the world’s single largest Muslim community with a spiritual leader, we strive to demonstrate Islam’s true teachings of moderation, tolerance, and love. We express our deepest condolences to Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar’s wife, children, and extended family, and hope the perpetrators are swiftly held accountable.

About the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community:

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a dynamic, reformist and fast-growing international movement within Islam. Founded in 1889, the Community spans more than 200 countries with membership exceeding tens of millions. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, established in 1920, is among the first American-Muslim organizations.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the only Islamic organization to believe that the long-awaited messiah has come in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadian, India. Ahmad claimed to be the metaphorical second coming of Jesus of Nazareth and the divine guide, whose advent was foretold by the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad. The Community believes that God sent Ahmad, like Jesus, to end religious wars, condemn bloodshed and reinstitute morality, justice and peace. Ahmad’s advent has brought about an unprecedented era of Islamic revival and moderation. He divested Muslims of fanatical beliefs and practices by vigorously championing Islam’s true and essential teachings.



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Muslim Sunrise Vol. XVI, First Quarter 1944

Ten Rules of Conduct

By Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali.
(1059-1111 A.D.)

The road to hell may be paved with good intentions but the path to heaven may not be built without them. Al-Ghazzali, insists on intention as the **first rule** of conduct. As usual he quotes tradition in support for his position: "Verily, to every man is the intention he hath resolved." This intention should be good and lasting without change. Good in so far as it continues to be good, and is not dissuaded from its goal but anything worldly, but persists in its resolve.

Unity of purpose is the **second rule**. Serving God alone is the way he states it. The sign of this service is to be satisfied with nothing but truth and to deem all things besides unworthy. "Woe unto him who is subservient unto money." Therefore, let him who would serve the Lord avoid the things of this world, and rest his hopes and aspirations in God. Al-Ghazzali realizes the difficulty of this rule in a world where man is exposed to want and need, and his standards are ruled by false values He warns against doubt as the most vicious of all afflictions. It drove him to the verge of madness. Therefore, 'cast away that which breedeth doubt within you, and take hold of that which maketh for strength.' Furthermore, man should be physically in this world, but in reality in the hereafter. "Be in this world as a stranger, or a traveler, and regard yourself as dead (to the world)." The outward sign of this state is contentment to be satisfied with mere shelter against the elements, and with enough to keep hunger from your door. "Sufficient unto a man is a mouthful wherewith he keepeth his body and soul together."

Therefore, he that has a loaf of barley should not seek a loaf of wheat, and he that has a mess of porridge should not desire a pot of gold. The sign of the stranger is a light load as he sojourns in alien land, and his mark is his disinclination to weigh himself down with the goods of this world. The sign of the traveler is his prompt response, and his seal is his contentment with what comes his way. The sign that one is dead to the world is to prefer the affairs of the hereafter to the affairs of this world.

The **third rule** is to conform throughout to truth and to make bold to differ with self by forsaking pleasure and enduring pain, by resisting desire and abjuring luxury and ease. As a result of such discipline, the disciple penetrates the veil, and enters upon that state where he could see the truth face to face. His sleep would then become wakefulness, his company solitude, his satiety hunger, his high rank abasement, his speech silence and his plenty paucity.

The babel of religious sects and philosophical thought confused and appalled al-Ghazzali. To him "this diversity in beliefs and religions, and the variety of doctrines and sects which divide men," were "like a deep ocean strewn with shipwrecks, from which very few can be saved." Worse still, "each sect believed itself sole possessor of truth and salvation; 'each: party', as the Koran puts it, 'rejoices in its own creed.' He, therefore, urged orthodoxy upon the Moslems. This constitutes his **fourth rule**. It is to conform in life to the established practice, and to avoid all innovations, lest one be a faddist, vain in his own ways. For he who is a law unto himself shall not prosper....

In the **fifth rule** al-Ghazzali recognizes the evils of procrastination and warns, against them, urging steadfast zeal and determination. In the sixth he reminds his fellow men of their duty to acknowledge their inability ('ajz) to accomplish anything without the help of God, but warns them not to use this as pretext for laziness in good works and neglect of independent action. Side by side with this sense of dependence they should cultivate humility and lowliness, and show respect and regard to their fellow men.

In the **seventh rule** al-Ghazzali preaches a doctrine of salvation by faith. He calls it the role of true fear and hope. One should not feel secure in the superiority of well-doing, but should rest his hope in God....

In the **eighth rule** al-Ghazzali recommends a life of devotion and Prayer. He is sure that to neglect devotional exercises is to shut oneself from the only source of spiritual power.

The eighth rule leads to the **ninth**, that of continual observation and watchfulness (muraqabah). This is the first of the mystical states; (sing. hal). He who persists in watching and observing his own heart for God, and banishes therefrom everything but God, will find God and His grace, and certainty besides. He will move from groping to tranquility, and from tranquility to reality, through the will and power of God. His mediation will, then, increase, until he attains true faith. Thence he will be absorbed in God, wherein is the substance, of faith. He will then say, "I have seen nought without seeing God there, exalted above all in His subsistence, existing through His will and power, according to the contemplation and presence of the heart." The outward sign of this rule is to be courteous to other people, and discriminating in the choice of friends and companions. The Prophet said,

"My Lord hath taught me,
and hath taught me well."

The **tenth rule** is consecration to a knowledge wherein one would see God. It should be pursued with diligence, both outwardly and inwardly. Its outward sign is perseverance in good works, since he who thinks that he can do without good works is a moral bankrupt. God, besides Whom there is none worthy of worship, said,

"Say, (O Muhammad to mankind),
'If ye love God, then follow me,
God will love you."





PERSPECTIVE

Educating the Educators (Falahud Din Shams)

Recently a group of terrorists in Nigeria, Boko Haram, kidnapped a group of girls from a school. It has been a few weeks and no sign of their whereabouts. Parents who have gone through the experience of their child missing for a few hours can imagine the pain and suffering of the parents of these kidnapped girls. Other than political, social and some evil issues in the minds of these kidnapers, their reason for the abduction is that the girls must not be educated. This idea has surfaced in Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere with the result of hundreds of girls-schools destroyed over the last few decades.

The shame of this whole phenomena and the irony is that the terrorists claim to perpetrate these heinous acts in the name of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa) instructed, "Every male and female Muslim must get education". His choice of words leaves no doubt that he made sure that there was no room for interpretation whether girls should be educated or not. The history of Islam established that throughout the world of Islam, women were not only educated but became the interpreters and commentators of religious books and the Shari'ah. This interpretation or innovation of terrorists about not educating the females is one from the whole list of evil ideas which never existed in the Islamic world. Killing all Christians and Jews and capital punishment for apostasy are a few examples of such ignorant innovations.

The Holy Prophet(sa) could have said that "every Muslim" should get an education. I could see that as being interpreted in different ways. It would be like the constitution of United States which says that "All men" are created equal. For a couple of hundred years "All men" actually was interpreted as "All white men". The statement of Holy Prophetsa left no room for such interpretation because he stipulated every male and female Muslim should seek education. Of course, that leaves the word "education" to be defined.

The Holy Prophet(sa) also instructed that one should seek education even if one has to travel to China to get it. Fourteen hundred years ago, it was a serious undertaking to go to China from Arabia. Crossing the deserts and mountains of Himalayas were serious obstacles. He also told us to pray in the words, "O Allah, give us knowledge that is beneficial to us."

There are schools in Pakistan funded by foreign governments where terrorism is taught and students are educated to blow themselves up. The "education" provided in these schools (*Madrassas*) is detrimental to peace in local population, Western countries and especially to the ones who eventually blow themselves up being ignorant of the real evil objectives of their educators. They certainly do not understand the education that is beneficial to them.

It is not just the sponsors of these schools to be blamed but the West also that has not taken the steps for proper education of the masses. It seems that everyone's self-interests are getting in the way of real education.

Terrorists teach their evil and erroneous interpretations of Shari'ah to the masses quoting the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa) out of context and sometimes completely opposing his views and instructions. Western media has their "experts" and "scholars" come on TV and declare how ridiculous these teachings are and explain the Western code of life.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad's instructions about education are even more needed today than ever before. Various groups seem to be educating only what's in their own interests. Looks like the educators could use a little education themselves. Education will eventually set us free so the lamb and the lion can live together. It will not happen unless everyone sacrifices their own interests for the sake of humanity's interests.

Meanwhile, we need to seriously pray that the abducted girls are returned to their parents who can continue to provide them the good education that the Holy Prophet(sa) commanded.

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